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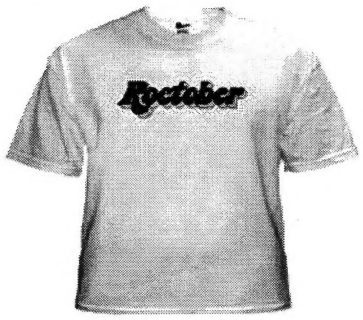

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ROCTOBER COMICS AND MUSIC #44
WINTER '07/'08/WWW.ROCTOBER.COM
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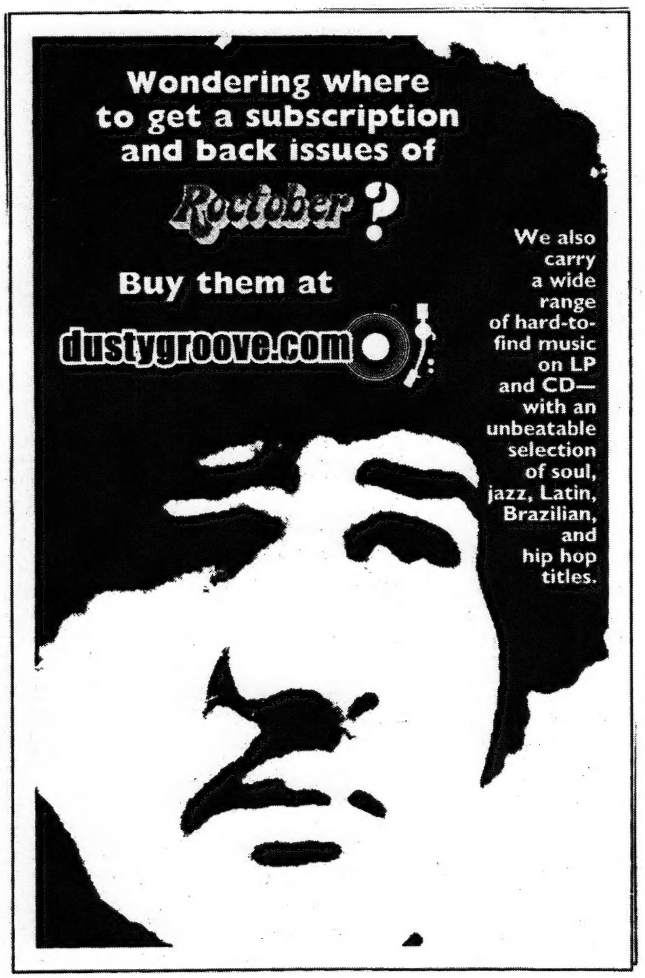
Dear Roctober Readers (a/k/a/ *the best readers on earth*!),
Obviously the biggest zine intro cliché is an apology for lateness, but in this case it seems appropriate. In our 15 years in print we have kept up our 3 issues a year pace pretty well, this being issue #44, but in 2007 we faced some obstacles, putting out only this issue, and not until December, at that. The primary reason I moved slow this year is a positive one; my hands were full of a relatively new baby. But the less pleasant side involves things I don't need to tell you fans of independent music and publications. There are some challenges in the current retail landscape, and as many of you know, the small press world is in pretty brutal shape these days. The combination of defaulting distributors, Tower's disappearance, and the postal rate hikes have made several of our favorite magazines cease publication, including *Punk Planet* and *Scram*. Fortunately *Roctober* is not in the financial hole some of our brothers and sisters are in, but we still had to step back to re-access our situation. After a bit of hustle we seem to have been able to get some new distribution, and to deal directly with a lot of stores, so that we can definitely keep publishing, keep our print run at it's current level, and keep our ad rates low. Basically, we have decided that we want to publish forever, and we're just going to have to figure out how to do that. Your subscriptions help, as does your love, so keep them both coming, tell your friends, and most importantly, enjoy the magazine!

\- Jake



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…songs about painters…

1. "Goodbye Toulouse" – The Stranglers
2. "Jackson Pollack" – Red Crayola
3. "Pablo Picasso" – Modern Lovers
4. "Andy Warhol" – David Bowie
5. "Salvador" – Sarah Hickman

…songs about mannequin/inflatable doll lust…

1. "Glendora – Perry Como, Downliners Sect
2. "Billion Dollar Babies" – Alice Cooper Group
3. "Sally (Would You Be My Girl)" - Police
4. "In Every Dream Home (A Heartache)" – Roxy Music
5. "Rubber Dolly" – Bill Parsons

I've been reading through your BTM Episode Guide, and it's made for quite interesting reading. There is one thing I want to point out, though. You say you don't think the Boyz II Men episode ever aired, and...you are dead wrong. I saw at least the later part of the episode (I don't remember if I ever saw the full episode, but I know for sure that I saw the later parts of it). I don't remember much about it, though, but I do remember them making light of Boyz II Men losing their popularity (as they put it) as they were seemingly "cast aside" in the years that followed their megahit "II" album. That being said, in lieu of your statement that the episode never aired, I'm inclined to believe that it was just not rerun very often. - MikeK102@aol.com

I just read your article about Mark Ridlin from the Roctober #42 issue. It brought back some good memories, but I wanted to clear up a couple of factual inaccuracies.

Mark states that he, Tom Battles and Reagan Eskridge formed Lithium in 1985 when Lithium played the Voulez-Vous show. Actually, I played bass guitar for Lithium at that show, Reagan played my little Casio toy keyboard, Mark was on drums and (if I recall) Tom played saxophone. We didn't have a guitarist, which was unique for a Dallas band in 1985. It was such an unusual line-up of instruments that the audience was blown away. The music was pretty good, too, if I say so myself. Somebody videotaped that show, but, unfortunately, the tape is long-lost.

Credit for the band's name should go to Reagan. A friend of ours had just been prescribed Lithium. He was none-too-thrilled about the prospect of having to live life without the extreme highs and lows that Bipolar Disorder offers and told us so. Reagan recounted that

conversation and thought that Lithium would make a provocative name for the band. We all agreed that it would.
After that show at Voulez-Vouz, Mark still wanted to play drums so we had a couple of rehearsals at my parents' house, trying to put together a set for another show. Among other ideas, Mark suggested we put together a psychedelic cover of "I've seen All Good People" by Yes. Unfortunately, Reagan and I were more interested in living a psychedelic lifestyle than in actually having to do the hard work it takes to play decent psychedelic music, so neither one of us was too reliable as a band member. We drifted away and Lithium evolved into Lithium Xmas. The rest, as they say, is history.
Also, I believe there is some inaccurate information about Reagan in the article. I spoke with his widow a few years back. She told me that Reagan passed away in 1997 after liver failure.
Regards,
Jimmie R. Markham

HI I READ IN ONE OF YOUR ARTICLES THAT THE TRENIERS TOOK CREDIT FOR BILL HAI EY SWITCHING TO ROCK AND ROLL I CAN TELL YOU THAT IS THE TRUTH BACK IN THE 50S I WAS SITTING IN THR RIPTIDE BAR WATCHING THE TRENIERS AND AFTER THERE SET CLAUDE AND CLIFF CAME OVER TO THE BAR JUST TO HANG OUT THE FANS AS WAS THERE STANDARD PRACTICE BILL HALEY WAS [PLAYING ACROSS THE STREET WITH A WESTERN BAND THE SADDLEMEN BILL STOPPED IN TO CATCH THE TRENIERS AND SAT DOWN WITH CLIFF WHO WAS RIGHT NEXT TO ME AND ASKED WHAT THEY CALLED THE MUSIC THEY PLAYED CLISS EXPLAINED IT WAS A MIXTURE AND HE WENT BACK STAGE AND BROUGHT BILL OUT SOME ARRANGMENTS HALEY WAS VERY EXCITED HE CAME BACK THE NEXT YEAR WITH HIS ROCK AND ROLL GROUP AND THAT'S HOW IT CAME ABOUT BY THE WAY I STILL BELIEVE TO THIS DAY THE TRENIERS WERE THE BEST ENTERTAINMENT GROUP EVER TO HIT SHOW BUSINESS AND THAT WAS A VERY EXCITING TIME – Vince Griffin

Hi- This is Lora Norton from the CD6 I wanted to tell you I enjoyed the article in your magazine. It was so funny to see the article about Paul Williams and the sketch of the screaming guy from Phantom of the Paradise because my mother was the costume designer on that movie!! That mask scared the shit of me when I was little. Anyway, I enjoyed the magazine!- LORA
Of course it's OK for you to print my letter! My mother's name is Rosanna Norton in case you want to know. I did remind her of her genius and she said "Thank You". - LORA

Hi Roctober,
Just finished reading the latest issue and I wanted to run a few random thoughts past you.
As always, no matter what, there's ALWAYS several things in every issue of ROCKTOBER that makes me go, "Damn! That was fun/educational/interesting/enlightening." Congrats again.
Nardwuar's interview with Arika Bambaataa was awesome – I'm tempted to track down Nard's DVD now.
Your piece on New Orleans Jazz Fest '06 brought back many fond memories (and some sad ones, too) about our visits to NO in 2002 and 2005.
Once Jones is old enough to appreciate it, Helen and I are keen to return to America and show him all the really great places we visited, top of the list being New Orleans (Chicago being a close second).
An awesome piece on Jobriath – it was very interesting to gain some insight into the inner workings of an obsessed fan. Part of me felt a great deal of pity for Jonathan Poletti, who appears to be wrestling with a lot of inner demons. On a related matter, I can't even imagine how Def Leppard would handle a Jobriath song...rather badly, I'd guess (but then, I'm not a Def Leppard fan). It was fascinating to see Poletti reject Jobriath's original song at the end of the article in favour of Def's version. It was quite a stunning decision. He also made a lot of assumptions at the end about gay men (and I don't agree with any of them), but his thought processes were fascinating to read.
A minor note on your Al Lewis obituary. I wouldn't have described Terry-Thomas as "effeminate". Now, I'd describe his contemporaries Kenneth Williams and Charles Hawtrey (of "Carry On..." fame) as most definitely effeminate (screaming queens, even).
But TT usually portrayed a strictly heterosexual older lecher (who was also a bounder and a cad) in his movies. Maybe you were swayed by TT's campy facial expressions and over-the-top upper-class accent. But I always watched Terry-Thomas in films and felt he was obviously "a ladies' man".
PSYCHOTRONIC VIDEO mag is dead? I can't believe it. I loved that mag. :(
Re: The Geordie review...AC/DC with Brian Johnson is blanderised-for-the-masses corporate rock crap, but AC/DC with Bon Scott was genuinely brilliant Aussie pub rock. I don't own any AC/DC albums post-Scott's death, but own several of the late 70s releases with Scott at the helm. Back then, AC/DC were aggressive, loud, nasty and more punk in their attitude than most other bands who claimed to be punk at that time. Bon exuded menace with a capital "M". If you haven't listened to an album like DIRTY DEEDS DONE DIRT CHEAP, let me know and I'll burn you a copy. It really is great stuff. Sadly, most music fans today only know the cock-rock shite Acca-Dacca have been churning out for the past 25 years. It's a shame.
We watched 10 minutes of the new Neil Hamburger DVD the other night (sent to me to review in PEOPLE Magazine) and I turned it off 'cos I could see Helen was going to explode if I didn't. He really is.....an acquired taste. :P
I passed the DVD onto a workmate who may still review it.
All in all, another 120 pages of rockin' goodness.
Cheers,
Dann (& Helen...and baby Jones)/Betty Paginated magazine

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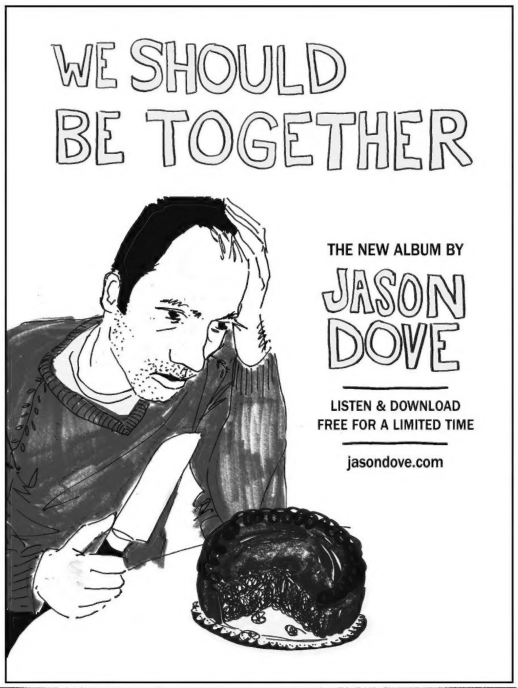

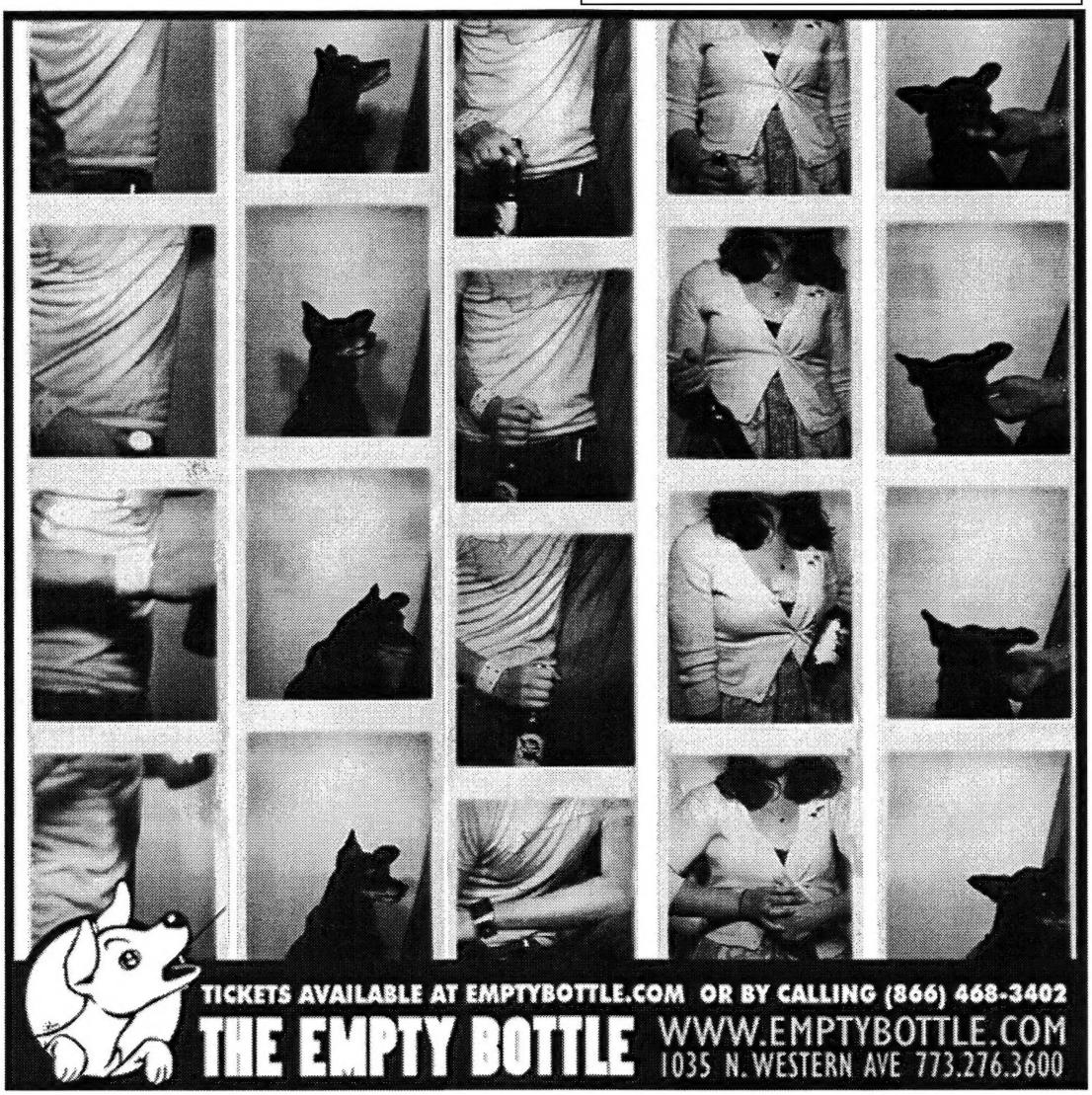

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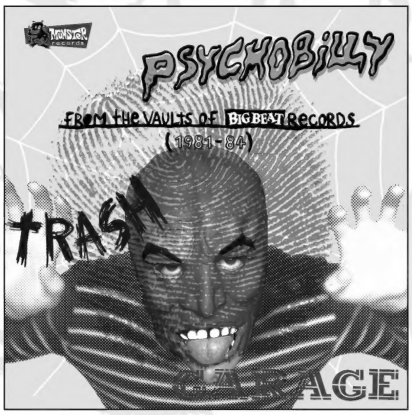

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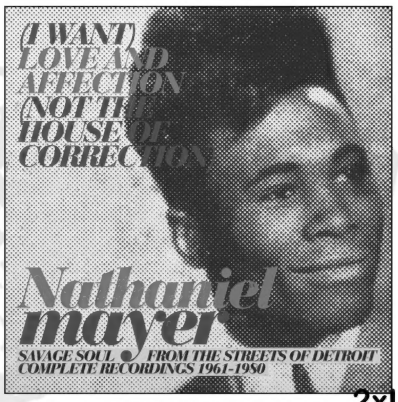

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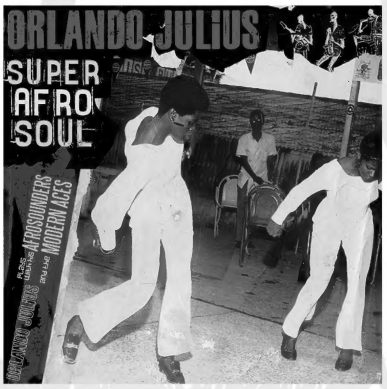

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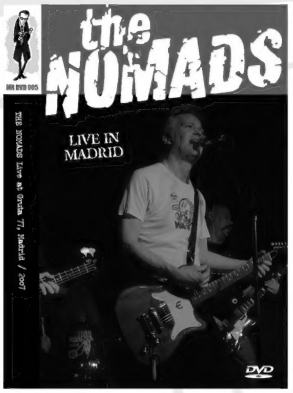

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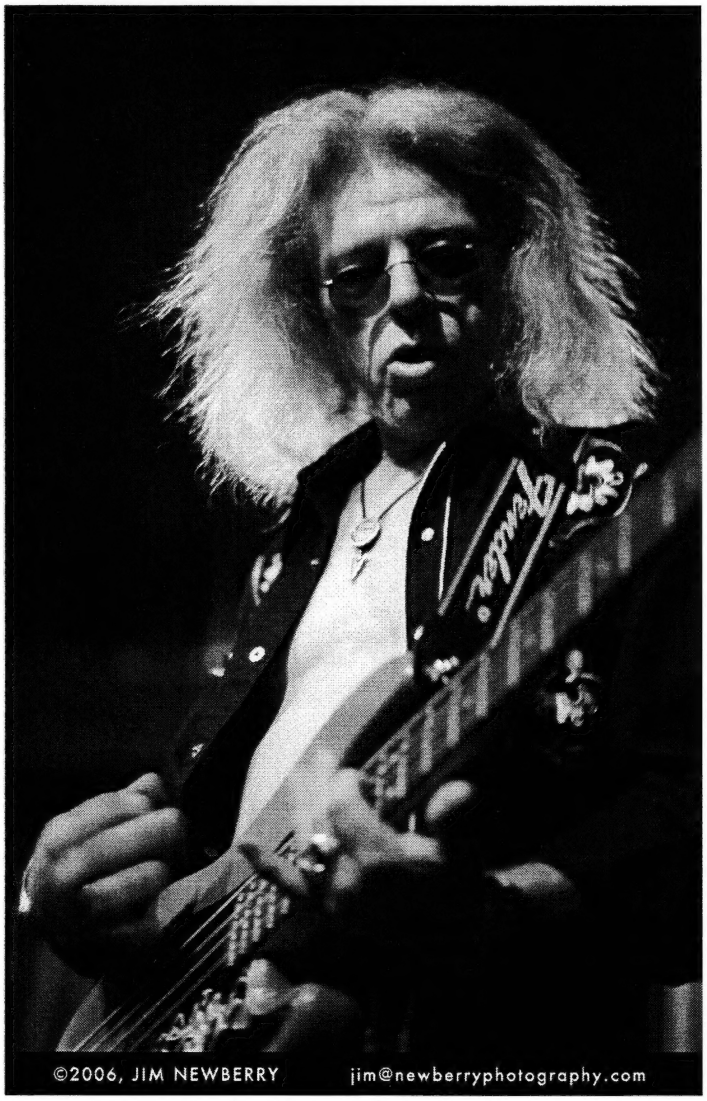
"THE ORIGINAL HUMAN BEING":

BLUE CHEER

THE DICKIE PETERSON INTERVIEW



By Gentleman John Battles

Blue Cheer were, in their heyday, the loudest and most feared band on the planet. Their savage breakthrough LP, 1968's "Vincebus Eruptum," and concurrent 45 release, a brutal reworking of Eddie Cochran's classic, "Summertime Blues," destroyed everything in it's path, and laid the groundwork for Heavy Metal, Punk, Grunge, and the latter day Stoner Rock movement. The outstanding follow-up LP, "Outside Inside" only served to further raise the bar, but, the classic lineup soon began to fall apart, with singer and bassist, Dickie Peterson, the only man left standing from the original Power Trio. With a revolving door policy in effect, the later Blue Cheer lineups recorded some enjoyable, if comparatively sedate, material, and Peterson bore the brunt of Rock 'n' Roll excess and artistic discontent. The band officially called it quits in 1972, though, Peterson, who'd obtained the rights to the Blue Cheer name, would not give up without a fight. While he instigated several comeback attempts in the 70s and 80s, it wasn't until the early-to-mid 80s Heavy Metal revival (and it WAS a revival, not anything particularly new, kiddies), which found Dickie reunited with his long lost friend and original drummer, Paul Whaley, that Blue Cheer became, once again, a force to be reckoned with. Peterson and Whaley have worked together ever since, barring the odd hiatus here and there. The two have played, primarily, for the last 20 years, with guitarist, Andrew "Duck" MacDonald, late of Savoy Brown (MacDonald informs me that he and Dickie met in a Western movie standoff over an open bottle of whiskey. The two parties decided that it would be more fun to drink it together than to fight over it...though Dickie claims Duck kicked his ass). Until recently, the band was based in Germany, a stronghold of their popularity. Upon returning to the states, Duck concluded, "We've got to do what the younger bands are doing, so we're touring all over the country in a white van with a crew of just two people, besides ourselves." When they come to your town, that's exactly what you'll see, no entourage, no hangers-on, just three basically nice guys who play basically not nice music. Dickie Peterson, today, is one of the great, unsung, elder spokesmen of Rock 'n' Roll. There's probably nothing you could tell him that he hasn't already seen or heard, but, he takes a genuine concern for the people around him, and doesn't gloat over the fact that, yes, his week beats your year. Dickie (like each Blue Cheer member) maintains a one-on-one relationship with his fans that's rare in this day and age. They're still living by the philosophy of Rock 'n' Roll as a communal force. They're no-bullshit people making no-bullshit music. While they're still being lambasted by critics (the Chicago Tribune crucified them after their appearance at Intonation fest, yet, Dickie turned up on the front page, right above the American flag!), and life on the road (they've been touring almost nonstop since returning to the states. By the time you read this, they will have played the Chicagoland area FOUR TIMES in well under a year) can take it's toll on men their age, The Cheer's "Never Say Die" spirit should serve as an inspiration to anyone in their field that's been stepped on more than a few times. As my friend, Jeff Dahl, called 'em. "Punks before YOU were a Punk," and they're STILL kicking my punk-ass. They'll kick yours, too, though with music, not physical violence. They still may not be the kind of guys you'd want to take home to meet Mom, though they are the kind you should be proud to call your friends, in plain earshot of your mom. This band still represents the remnants of the late Sixties dream -- the idea that people should look out for each other (which also flourished briefly, but died just as fast, with the punk movement), and that we should all have each other's backs, not with weapons, but with commitment and concern. They're ready to take a stand for their fans, just as their fans have done for them. Dickie's lived more than a few lives by now, all of them real, and he's nothing if not a great storyteller....

"He said, Quote: "DIG THIS, BOY!!!"

"Paul Whaley and I started Blue Cheer in 1966. I'd been playing in a band called Group B, which later changed its name to Andrew Staples. They fired me because they wanted to play four-point Baroque, and I wanted to play Rock 'n' Roll. They'd catch me playing Chuck Berry songs whenever there was a break in practice, and they'd say, "What the Hell are you doing?! You're supposed to be playing BACH!" During the time I was in Group B, I was hanging out with Paul Whaley a lot. He was with a group called Oxford Circle, and I really loved what those guys were doing, Yardbirds, Them, that sort of thing. So, after they kicked me out of Group B, I asked Paul if he wanted to start a band with me, and he said, "Yeah," so, that's how Blue Cheer began. We started out as a six-piece Blues band, and we went through a lot of different people. We had two guitarists, my Brother, Jerre Peterson, and Leigh Stephens. We would play

anywhere people would let us play! We played at "The Original Human Be-In" in the summer of '67. Timothy Leary and Allen Ginsburg and all these other people were there. We ended up doing the soundtrack for a short film about the event. It looks really crazy, cause sometimes the filmmakers who were around, then, were just as stoned as the musicians were! That was with the six piece, but, that lineup fell apart pretty quickly. One time, we were doing a gig, and the other guys weren't doing anything at all, so, Leigh, Paul, and I stopped playing, and the only guy still playing anything was my Brother! The other two guys left, and we tried playing out as a four-piece, but, my brother left the group, right before a gig. Now, my brother was the primary singer in the group at that time. He was a good guitarist, a good lead singer, and he did good harmony vocals. I didn't consider myself a singer, but, we had to do that gig, so I had to work it out. After that, we became a three-piece. People think we were trying to be like Cream or Hendrix, but, that's not how it was at all. I've always loved Hendrix, don't get me wrong. We still do some of his songs. As far as Cream is concerned, I especially loved the way Jack Bruce played the bass and sang, but, we were nothing like them. We decided, however, that this is what we wanted to do, to go in for a heavier sound. We had been playing for about a year when we went in to record our first album. We basically did our live show, the same songs, the same setup. The first day was a disaster, we blew out the studio's echo chamber. They weren't too happy about that! *(Jeff Dahl notes, in his liners to the "Louder Than God, The Best of Blue Cheer," that this had only happened twice before, with full orchestras)* We didn't know much about working in the studio, but we went back, and, in all, it only took three days to record it. We didn't have to rehearse for that, all the material on "Vincebus Eruptum," all the changes, all the solos, were played exactly like our live show. We did "Parchment Farm," which was a Jazz standard, written by Mose Allison as "Parchman Farm" *(Elvis Presley's father, Vernon, did time on the infamous prison farm of the same name - John)* I don't know what Mose Allison thought about it, but, I'm sure he likes getting those royalty checks! As a matter of fact, I lived down the street from Mose Allison for a while, in San Francisco, but I never got to ask him what he thought of Blue Cheer's "Parchment Farm." It probably made his little bald head spin! Of course, "Summertime Blues" by Eddie Cochran, was the one that really took off, so did the album, and it all happened very quickly for us. Too quickly. I was 19, and, suddenly, I had all this money. But, it ended just as quickly as it began. When you're that young, you forget about the people you knew coming up. You can't forget about your friends. I learned that the hard way, you can't forget about your friends. The people in the audience, now, they're like my extended family. I tell them they're the fourth member of Blue Cheer, and that's no lie. It's great that we get so many different kinds of people coming to our shows. We've had people bringing their kids, which is great, keeping it in the family.

We did several TV shows on the strength of the single, "Summertime Blues." We got to do *The Steve Allen Show*, partly because Mercury Records got on their case, but, mainly because we were with The Phillip Morris Agency. That was the top agency in America at the time. I remember Steve Allen saying that when you go to see a musical, there are certain tunes you can walk away humming to yourself, but, you couldn't do that with us! We did *Bandstand*, but, we weren't exactly what *American Bandstand* had expected! At the time, we were being managed by "Gut" Terkl, who'd been a Hell's Angel, and Gut and I were sitting in the dressing room, smoking a bowl of hash, and Dick Clark walked in, and looked at us, and he says, " PEOPLE LIKE YOU GIVE ROCK 'n' Roll A BAD NAME!" We looked back at him, and we said, "Thank you very much!" That was the last time we were ever on *Bandstand*. In Germany, we appeared on *Beat Club* and *Rockpalast*, that was with Randy Holden, as Leigh Stephens had left by then. The band was lip synching, Randy was miming to Leigh's parts on "Summertime Blues" on *Beat Club* and "The Hunter" on *Rockpalast*. We did a show in Germany where the music was taken off the recording, and the vocal was done live. So, I was singing, but, Randy didn't sing. He sang the three songs on one album, "New! Improved!," but, by then, we didn't want Randy, not because Randy's not a good guitar player, but, because his method of operating and working in a band didn't coincide with ours. That was the crux of Paul and I not being able to deal with Randy. There was not enough lateral movement in his approach to what the music is. I'm a bass player. I write my songs on the bass, and I sing playing the bass, and, if a guitar player looks at me and says, "What do you want me to do?," all I can look back at him and say is, "Look, if you don't know what to do, I want a guitar player that DOES…" Our music is not really complicated, it's what I call lateral movement. Duck can do a solo that is much longer than anything we've rehearsed. I like that. We know what's gonna happen, we are in touch with one another. I call it the umbilical chord. It's an invisible chord that's attached to our belly buttons that runs between all three of us, and, actually, even our soundman. I've played with Paul for 40 years. I know when it's a good night and when it's a bad night, and we don't have to tell each other what is what. We know. Nobody has to come off stage and rag you. Nobody rags you worse that YOU do. Now, I've come offstage feeling I've had a VERY bad night, and been confronted with people that feel I had a very GOOD night, but, I think that's the dilemma of every performer.

By the time of the second album, "Outside Inside," they just decided that they could not control us in the studio. I've always hated the studio. I much prefer playing live. They had us playing on one pier in New York, and another one in San Francisco, then, they put the embellishments on it in the studio. "Voco" Kesh, our producer, came up with all these studio effects that I knew nothing about. I didn't know what a phlanger was, or how phasing worked. I really liked the way these songs came out, but, we said to ourselves, "How are we gonna do this stuff, live?" At some point, Leigh just lost interest. He kind of distanced himself from the rest of us, so, we fired him, then we brought in Randy, which, as I said, did not work out. Randy's doing fine, though. So's Gary Yoder (Guitarist/Vocalist with Oxford Circle, Kak, and on Blue Cheer's last two LPs on Phillips). As a matter of fact, I jammed with Gary, not last summer, but the summer before, in the town of Davis, California, where he came from, and where Oxford Circle came from. He went back home. He has a swimming pool cleaning service, and he plays his guitar, and sings his songs, in clubs in and around that area. I jammed with several of the guys from the old Oxford Circle that day. He got married, I think, to Weaver, who was our house girl, took care of the house and stuff. So, he's doing fine. I'm glad that Gary and Randy are both doing well. Everybody in this band, that has been affiliated with this band, is doing well. I'm glad, because there's a few that aren't around. I do like some of the later Blue Cheer songs, because I'm a songwriter, and that's part of the reason why I created Mother Ocean (*a blues based side project featuring Dickie and Eighties B.C. guitarist, Tony Rainier. Their repertoire includes songs from different phases of Blue Cheer's career*), because I am a songwriter. Not every song I write is something

that should be used in Blue Cheer. Sometimes, I write Country songs. I write Blues songs, I write Rock n'' Roll songs...I don't know WHAT'S gonna actually come out when I sit down and write. I just get an idea, and I say, "Hey, man, where can I take this," and I start playing around with it, and it winds up SOMETHING. I'm not sophisticated enough to sit down and say, "Ohh, I'm going to write about the smell of the flowers." Some songs come in 10 minutes, some songs have taken me 20 years. You have to formulate an organized piece of music that people can work with. When we were based in Germany, in the 90s, we became friends with The Groundhogs-Tony McPhee, Mickey Jones and Dave Anderson. Dave engineered our album, "Highlights and Lowlives," which is one of my favorite Blue Cheer records. There's a song on there called "Blues Cadillac," which was a CD-only bonus track. I've always liked that song. I was doing it when Blue Cheer reformed in the 80s, but, really, I was doing that as far back as 1972, with a band called Peterbilt, not long after Blue Cheer split up. Tony McPhee came by, and played slide guitar on "When Two Spirits Touch" on the album, "Dining With The Sharks." Mickey and Dave were on it, too *(Note: Tony McPhee announced, a few years ago, that he was planning to retire The Groundhogs. Reportedly, he's still fronting a version of the group, whose lifespan has since passed the 40 year mark, while another group, The Groundhogs Rhythm Section, featuring members of the classic lineup, has recently turned up, sans McPhee. One is strongly urged to check out The Groundhogs' back catalogue - John)* That was the last studio album we did, over 15 years ago, but we do have our new album, which is almost completed. It's been 40 years since Blue Cheer started. I made the decision, when I was about 15, that I was going to be a musician, that's all there was to it. I just didn't know I was going to do Blue Cheer! Paul and I have been playing together for 40 years, and Duck has been playing with us for 20 years, but, here in the states, he's "The new guy." We hadn't really toured the U.S. in over 20 years. People are seeing this lineup for the first time, here in the states. But, this band has been through high, low, it's been through some very dark, dark places of the human psyche, and I'm really proud of the fact that it's still standing, and it still rocks. As I said before, our longevity in doing that, and going through all that stuff that we went through, as human beings will go through, there was a lot of self-abuse involved. The things that go with having a hit record when you're 19 years old, and then you turn 25, and you realize that everybody still wants you to be 19 years old. They don't WANT you to be 25. Better off you died at 20! You go through many changes when these things are all around you. I could tell you, honestly, I DON'T understand why I'm still standing. I've done things with people that I know have died from it, personal friends of mine. I wrote a song that's going to be on the new album called "Young Lions in Paradise." It's not about Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix, or any of these people. It's about these cats, and ladies, that were my friends, and many people's friends.

When I was living in Germany, they treated me real well, not to say they put me on a pedestal, but, they really love their music, there. But, as I say, we felt it was time to come home. I remember the last gig we did in Chicago, in 1971. We were playing at The Beaver Club. There were two people on the dance floor that took off their clothes and started fucking, and the police came, and our road crew shoved us out the back door, and we all got into separate taxicabs and went to the airport, cause they really wanted us for creating a disorderly situation. We were told to leave town. As far as San Francisco is concerned, we didn't relate to the San Francisco music scene, which was influenced by Folk and stuff like that. We were more influenced by Blues, and we wanted to expand on that. We were teenagers, and that anger had to come out, and, in our case, it came out through our music."

Message to the fans: "I'd like to say, just to keep Rock 'n' Roll alive, man, cause it's very magical, and it's really a tool that everybody should use, whether you're listening, or whether you're playing, no matter what. No matter what it is you do, there's something there that's of value for you, and I really believe in Rock 'n' Roll.."

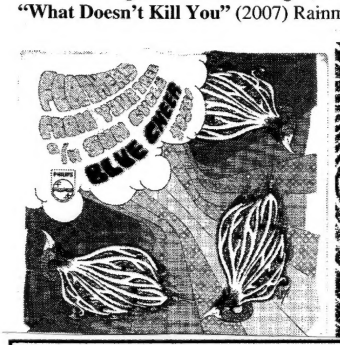
"Without a little bit of soul, you know, it wouldn't be right. That screamin' guitar, it wouldn't sound so outasite!" - "Heart Full Of Soul," Dickie Peterson.

Thanks: Duck MacDonald, Paul Whaley, Jake Austen, Jeff Dahl, Derek. For Jerre Peterson and Ralph Burns Kellogg.

Blue Cheer covers include: "Summertime Blues" (as per their arrangement)-Ventures, Elvis Hitler, Goblins, Rush (combined with The Who's arrangement). "Out Of Focus" - Redd Kross. "Parchment Farm" -Deadmoon (altered, but influenced by Blue Cheer's version), "Magnolia Caboose Babyfinger" (as "Magnolia Caboose Babyshit")- Mudhoney. "Come and Get It" - Sick Rose. The Blue Cheer Tribute CD, "Blue Explosion" is highly recommended, if you can find a copy.

Partial Blue Cheer discography

"Vincebus Eruptum" (1968) Phillips
"OutsideInside" (1968) Phillips
"New! Improved!" (1969) Phillips
"Blue Cheer" (1969) Phillips
"B.C.#5-The Original Human Being" (1970) Phillips
"Oh, Pleasant Hope!" (1971) Phillips
"The Beast Is.....Back" (1984) Megaforce
"Louder Than God...The Best of Blue Cheer" (1986) Rhino
"Good Times Are So Hard To Find" (compilation) (1987) Mercury
"Blitzkrieg Over Nuremburg" (live) (1988) Magnum Music Group (UK)
"Highlights and Low Lives" (1989) Magnum Music Group
"Dining With The Sharks" (1991) Niebelung (Germany)
"Live and Unreleased-1968-74" (1994?) Captain Trips (Japan)
"Live and Unreleased-1968" Captain Trips (1996)
"Hello Tokyo, Goodbye, Osaka" (live) (1997) Captain Trips
"Live in Japan" (2003) Track
"Live Bootleg London-Hamburg" (2005) Rockview
"What Doesn't Kill You" (2007) Rainman *(see review this issue)*



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Kieth John Adams

"Unclever"

Release Date: January 22nd 2008

KJA's just finished a new album, Unclever. It was recorded in Athens GA USA by Jason NeSmith, who recorded, produced, and bashed drums. Kay Stanton sometimes played the bass. Ant Chapman did the final mix in the UK.

Fishboy

"Albatross (How we...)"

Release Date: November 20th, 2007

A great appreciation of their home, the folks that surround them, and the rich history of Texas music are a few of the themes that run deep through the band's new album, Albatross: How We Failed To Save The Lone Star State With The Power Of Rock And Roll, a record that Michener calls "a rock opera about how myself, the band, and the ghost of Buddy Holly attempt to save Texas by going on a tour/crime spree in order to perform all 8,030 of the songs I've written in my sleep since I was in the womb."

Eux Autres

"Cold City"

Release Date: December 4th, 2007

Eux Autres (pronounced ooz-oh-tra), a Portland-based duo, plays pop music. The band consists of brother and sister Heather and Nicholas Larimer. Heather plays drums, Nicholas plays guitar, and they both sing. Practices frequently devolve into shoving matches.

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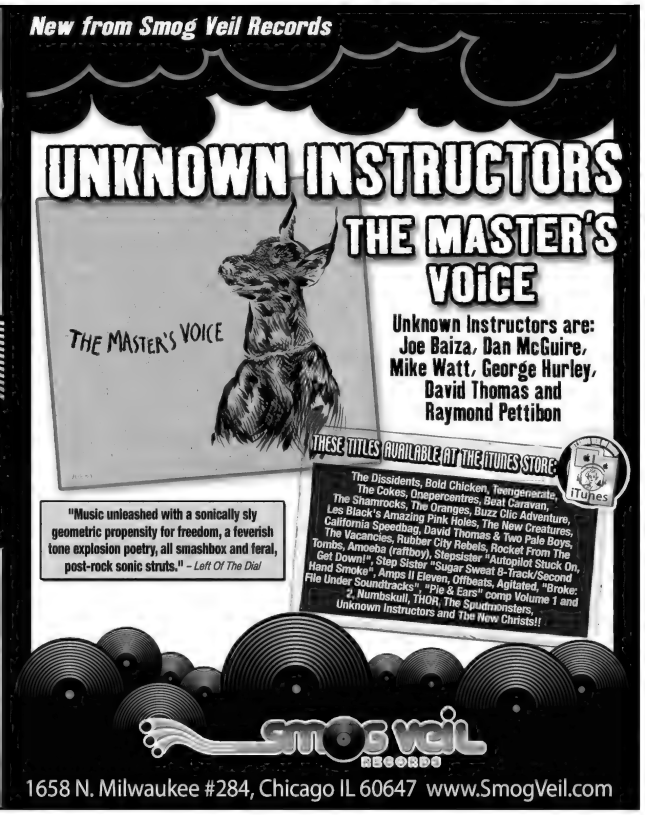

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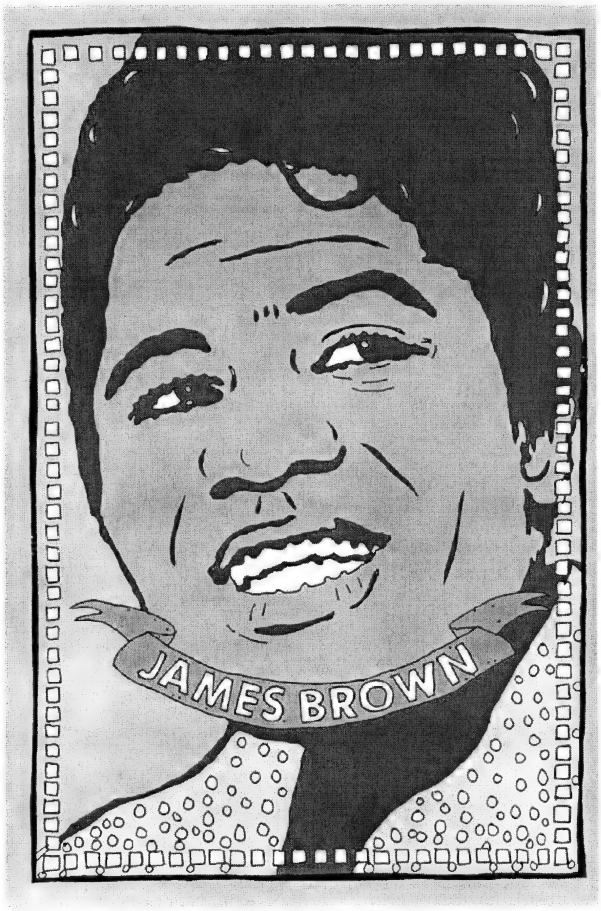


by Jake Austen

While it was jarring to wake up last Christmas morning to learn of James Brown' death, it was far from sad. Though the tireless workload he took on in the sixties and seventies that earned him his "hardest working man in show business" title eased up in subsequent decades, his long, difficult life had become especially challenging in recent years. Few septuagenarians could painlessly endure a steady schedule of grueling, physical performances, but Brown's activities were complicated by debilitating diabetes, a rushed recovery from colon cancer, money troubles, legal woes, traitorous relatives, and a strained, strange marriage. The sad fact is that James Brown's death is not merely occasion for the standard "rest in peace" well-wishings, but is likely the first time in decades that he has been able to genuinely rest, period.

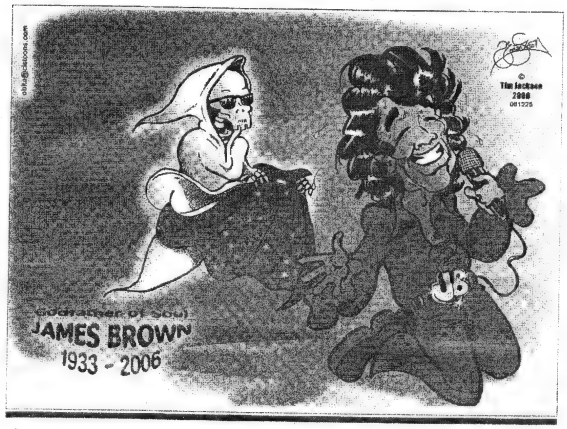
Full disclosure: my James Brown fandom borders on fanaticism. Always fascinated by prolificity, I fell under the Godfather's spell in my pre-school, where the sturdy classroom record player was turreted by towering stacks of Brown's Polydor, King and People singles, many with his striking portrait on the label. For the last twenty years I have tried to see Brown live as many times as possible. Though he was perceived by many as an oldies act, mechanically (if enthusiastically) executing the same signature gimmicks for half a century, fans who kept close dibs appreciated both the potency he still possessed, and the absurdity of some of his would-be-innovations, including James Brown cookies, the James Brown Macarena, and the surprisingly funky, though absurdly didactic, 2001 single, "(Killing is Out) School is In." Of course, Brown's live shows are the source of his legend (my personal favorite was a fiery 1996 Grant Park concert in which the photo pit became a private V.I.P. section for legendary pimp/evangelist Bishop Don Magic Juan). But as a child weaned on the boob tube, for my money Brown achieved immortality on the television screen.

As a burgeoning music fan in the late seventies and early eighties his TV appearances became an obsession of mine, and in the days of independent video stores I was lucky that our local shop stocked well-worn copies of *The Best of Ed Sullivan* and *The T.A.M.I. Show.* In my book *TV-A-Go-Go: Rock on TV from American Bandstand to American Idol* I hold up Brown as perhaps the greatest icon of televised pop. His 1965 appearance on *Shindig* may be the best argument ever for the validity of lip-synching as an art form. Liberated from a microphone cord, his scrambling, shuffling, hypnotizing performance was a clinic on the magic of movement. Conversely, when his full band took over the *Soul Train* set, they unleashed one of the best live performances in TV history, culminating with Brown engulfed in a sea of vibrant, beautiful black teenagers pumping their fists and chanting, "Say it loud, I'm black and I'm proud!" Brown is famed for staving off a race riot in Boston by performing a live televised concert in the wake of Dr. King's 1967 assassination, but his influence over his people extended well into the 21st century. In 2003, like a faith healer, Brown's touch redeemed a man who had spent a fortune denying his race. When Michael Jackson joined his idol in performance at the inaugural *BET Awards* the Godfather offered the pale pop star his famed cape. In the wake of this exhilarating moment the show's host declared, "Michael Jackson...you're still black! You're still one of us!" Such is the power of Brown.

I spent my Christmas holidays, and the ensuing weeks, glued to the television, and buried in newspapers and magazines, surveying the news coverage and tributes. Nearly every story led with, or quickly segued into, the idea that rap music owed its existence to James Brown. These statements are, of course accurate, and it would be irresponsible journalism to omit them, but it still seems a bit distasteful to validate such an extraordinary artist by cataloguing what he spawned rather than with his own work. In the only Christmas night prime time programming change, BET replaced a rerun of *In Living Color* with a special called *Timeless* which told Brown's story in a montage of archival BET coverage, with Donnie Simpson, Tavis Smiley and Jacque Reid converging for a parade of praise. But with nearly every segment focusing with laser precision on what rap records sampled, quoted, or ripped off Brown, the show in many ways was an insult to the teenagers of the last quarter century. While a contemporary kid could conceivably dismiss a chestnut like "Try Me" as a crusty dusty, I profoundly believe that any adolescent hip hop fan can fully appreciate Brown's funk compositions from the early seventies without an iota of contextualization. At his peak Brown made music that was so powerful, so timeless, and so singular that despite decades of building upon, stealing from, and remixing his work, not only has it not been improved upon, it also has not become old. While unearthed Brown tributes from the vaults of VH1 and PBS, newly produced specials on BET, and countless network news segments all made statement after statement about Brown's influence,

each of these programs peaked when they let the music make it's own case.

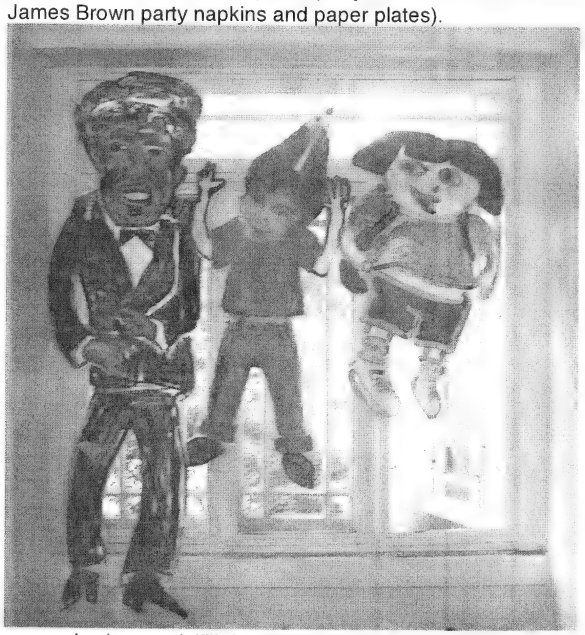
The other thing that seemed a little off was that, appropriately I suppose, none of the press seemed to be telling the James Brown stories that are inevitably told when people tell James Brown stories. Brown's genius was not unrelated to madness, and anyone who ever had personal, artistic, or business dealings with the performer, or even met him in passing, usually heard him say something outrageous, do something strange, or make a baffling demand. If he told you it was OK to take a photo with him, he might rage if you took a second. His most infamous incident, an interstate car-chase that helped land Brown in prison in 1988, was set off by a perceived violation of the sacred space of his private bathroom. Each interview or conversation likely contained dynamically orated musings on politics, spirituality, and race that often contradicted whatever he said in the previous sentence. But the eccentric portrait these anecdotes paint was absent in most coverage immediately following his death. Other than an unintentionally horrific political cartoon in the *Chicago Defender* that showed the Grim Reaper in sunglasses draping a cape over Brown, the only non-lionizing portrayal I saw in the local press was Dave Hoekstra's account of his bizarre, three hour late, confrontational interview with a hot dog gobbling Brown.



By far the most positive, and the most important, post-mortem James Brown TV show was his elaborate Augusta, Georgia funeral. Airing in it's entirety on CNN, and then re-airing in an edited version on BET, the ceremony featured moving tributes by legendary African American orators, tense drama via his wife's tenuous presence (the family and estate had launched a publicity campaign disputing the marriage, though Brown clearly considered her his wife and partner, making her an integral part of his revue, as thousands of confused fans who attended his 2001 Washington Park concert can attest), and the surprise of Michael Jackson's return to the states from post-trial exile. Jackson, who essentially launched his career as a James Brown impersonator (a film of Jackson mimicking Brown led to the Jackson 5ive's Motown contract) delivered a heartfelt farewell.

But despite the memorial service being the most prominent television moment, the most powerful footage came days earlier, when CNN cablecast the footage of throngs of Harlemites lining up to view Brown's remains in the Apollo Theater. Far from somber, the excited crowd chanted, "James Brown! James Brown! James Brown!" in a seemingly endless loop as they waited to see the legend lie in state. Of course, CNN used that phrase "lie in repose," as Brown was not a dignitary, a royal, or a federal officeholder, but to his cheering subjects that wasn't the case. Perhaps many of Brown's seeming eccentricities – his sense of entitlement, his lashing out at errors in protocol, his propensity to hold court whether his ideas were fully formed or not - stem from his knowledge that he was in fact a monarch with divine rights. If the entire world recognized what his chanting subjects in that queue understood then perhaps a lot of the conflicts that plagued his later years could have been avoided.

Though I didn't find Brown's death a tragedy, one thought did make me very sad. At that same concert where I saw Bishop Juan tip his pimp hat to the Godfather I witnessed something that I consider the greatest moment in all of my concertgoing experiences. Early in the set a young father, after having obviously plead his worthy case to the security guards, walked up to the front row and held his infant son aloft so that the baby could gaze, with his own newborn eyes, upon the world's greatest living showman. He then calmly walked back to his distant seat, satisfied that his child was a witness to history. At that moment I vowed to give my then-theoretical child the same gift. Since my daughter Maiya's birth my family has prepared her for that moment with a steady diet of scratchy 45s and dance parties. Maiya became a Brown devotee, and her third birthday party (at her request) was a James Brown-themed soirée (actually a James Brown/Dora the Explorer party, as we couldn't secure James Brown party napkins and paper plates).



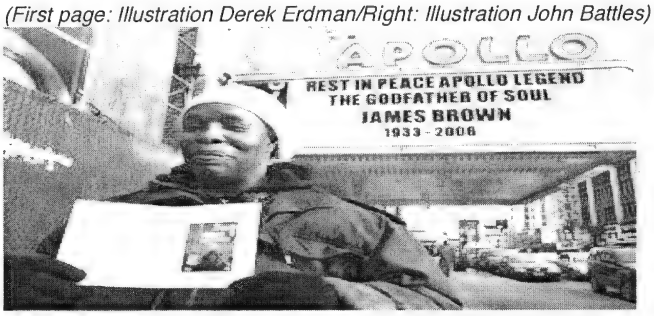
Anxious to fulfill the prophecy, I was prepared to take her to an announced James Brown festival in South Carolina but it never came to fruition. I was fairly confident I could get her into his 2006 House of Blues show, but after negotiating with a sympathetic publicity director (I pitched a magazine article about my daughter's fandom), it was concluded that legally a three year old was not allowed to attend the concert.

I was subsequently put in touch with Brown's people about possibly attending a sound check, but an odd Swedish woman, ostensibly part of Brown's management team, apologized, explaining that a fatigued Mr. Brown would not be performing at the sound check, though she promised to send my daughter a package of souvenirs (which she did not do).

Of course I didn't realize that was Maiya's last chance to see him. I certainly feel worse about my fatherly failures in not affording her the opportunity to lay eyes upon the great one than she does about his passing. While I'm proud of how easily she's handling the concept of death, it's a little jarring, on two fronts, to hear my four year old bluntly tell people "James Brown died," when his music comes on the radio. Luckily she very easily grasped the concept that an artist lives on beyond his lifetime. Perhaps in this my child has, for the first time, actually benefited from growing up in a home in which every wall is lined with videos and records.

It seemed that the official end of the televised James Brown lovefest would be his loony wife's appearance on the January 3rd *Larry King Live* to cry crocodile tears over the injustices she claimed the Brown estate was heaping upon her. But even that crazy-eyed, ex-Janis Joplin impersonator showed restraint, declaring she would not badmouth Brown's children in their time of grief, and attempting to keep the tawdriest anecdotes about her ex under wraps (deftly explaining away everything from domestic abuse to Brown taking out an ad in *Variety* denouncing her). In a week uglier coverage would surface on the tabloid shows, as family disputes left his body unburied, and his youngest son's paternity questioned, but for that night, a surprising amount of dignity was maintained. Dignity so dull and lifeless that, like most of the media coverage, it seemed unrelated to James Brown's grunting, spinning, yearning energy. But, in a wise move, for major portions of Tomi Rae Brown's interview, her talking head shrank considerably as archival footage of Brown, soundlessly performing, dominated the screen. As she monotonously rationalized her rehab stint, viewers were entranced by a bare-chested, sweat-covered genius freeing the souls of the Riker's Island prisoners lucky enough to see him perform in 1972. Moving like a funky teenager, a martial arts master, a futuristic robot, a gravity defying superhero, and ultimately, like nobody but himself, that brief clip reiterated that the magic he possessed could not be summarized with the generic accolades being heaped upon him, and that his greatness placed him above the earthly pains and woes that burdened his life and looked to plague his estate long after his death. Finally, at peace, papa didn't have to deal with this mess.

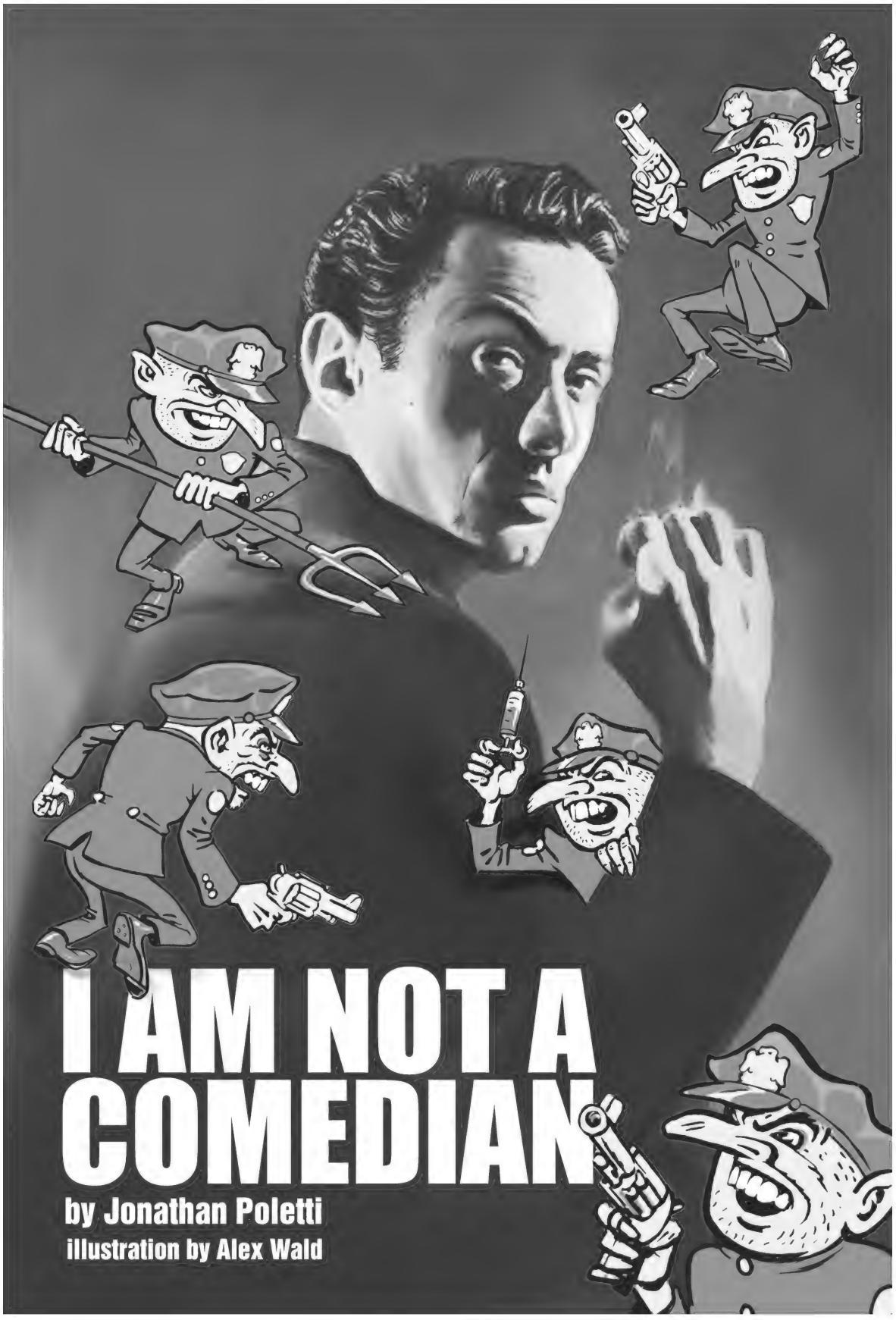
(First page: Illustration Derek Erdman/Right: Illustration John Battles)



HALL OF DYNAMIC GREATNESS 2007

UH! PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE!! TRY ME!! CUZ I FEEL GOOD!! I GOT THE FEELIN!! LIKE A SEX MACHINE!! GIVE THE DRUMMER SOME!! IF I RULED THE WORLD!! WE'D HAVE US A FUNKY PRESIDENT!! MACEO!! YOU GOT SOUL POWER!! IN YOUR HOT PANTS!! FOR GOODNESS SAKES (TAKE A LOOK AT THOSE CAKES)!! GOOD GOD!! IT'S A NEW DAY (SO, LET A MAN COME IN AND DO THE POPCORN)!! HIT ME, BAND! OW!! BACK UP AND DO THE JAMES BROWN!! DIG THIS!! THIS 'UN'LL KILL YA!! OOOOOOOOOWEEEEE!! I'M NOT GONNA TALK ALL DAY, BUT, I WANT YOU TO GET H'FEELIN'... PISCES! AQUARIUS! LEO! TAURUS! OHIUS! OHIUS?!

MR. JAMES BROWN


I AM NOT A COMEDIAN
by Jonathan Poletti
illustration by Alex Wald

He was born October 13, 1925 and though I can't find details I imagine his mom must've opened her legs (yet again) and in a last heave expelling blood, flesh & shit, *OUT HE CAME* — she screaming in pain as he screamed in pain, the last time they agreed on anything. Then they wiped her slop off him & tried to get him to quiet down, which he didn't — and never would. His life was one long infant shriek. WHY STOP? It's just the basic human story: his father wasn't much of one & his mother was even less, and like everyone else, he was damned to love them. WHY?? Why do we love our parents? We're spit out into *life* in a discharge of fetid, stinking substances & all we want to do after we eat & sleep is fall in love. We do it twice before giving up, for the rest of our — what we *call* — 'lives.' *They are both so bitterly disappointing*. He was not a happy child. I praise him already for his common sense. "I was always alone as a kid," he says in his autobiography. "As a kid," his biographer says, he was "a sulker. A pouter. A polluter of the emotional atmosphere." Logical responses to life. Sulk & pout. *Alone*. I am sick. Can you tell? Not merely in my thoughts but in my body. I'm lying on the floor, scratching out these ridiculous words with the least possible effort, as I don't want to be alive, and barely am. A *virus* is inside of me, an angry intelligence breeding, replicating, *colonizing* me cell by cell, seeking, as colonizers do to take over & turn me into itself, and I'm like, "*TAKE IT!*" — even as other forces within me are fighting back feverishly for me to remain who I am & the result is *I feel like shit*. When you're very sick a chasm opens up between your body & your thoughts so you become aware, brutally, of existing within a dying organism, and trying to think of anything other than that, my name spits up the name "Jesus Christ" so I open up the Bible to find J.C. up there addressing the human race in *STRANGELY GRACIOUS TERMS: "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"* — and I'm like, "Probably we won't?" I know why they killed him. They just wanted him to *shut up*. I close the book & another name whispers in my thoughts, but what does HE have to do with anything. He *doesn't*, is the answer. I know all about him. He was a comedian. He was famous for his swearing. Even the cops were big, big fans! They arrested him a bunch of times & then he died of it, apparently. This was back in the '60s. When I was a kid I saw a movie about him, called *Lenny*, but I mostly just remember he turned his wife lesbian & then tortured her for it, which didn't seem fair. I feel like I'm going to do a profile on him, but then I'm thinking, "No, I'm not." I'M *NOT*. I crawl to the computer & survey the ruins of a dead star: old LPs, CDs, posters, magazines, forgotten books. Just a lot of crap you can get for a few bucks. I order some & the packages just pile up on the floor. Nobody cares about him, including me. I crawl to my bookshelf & try a few of my favorites to cheer me up, like the diary of Virginia Woolf: "The truth is people scarcely care for each other. They have this insane instinct for life. But they never become attached to anything outside themselves." I close it. If there was a river nearby I'd go jump in. I wouldn't even hold my breath. *I'd just go*. I open up the Lenny Bruce books & skim. There's jokes about urinating on audiences, or dousing them in gas & lighting them up ("You'll go quick"). I guess that's funny. A monologue about ejaculation. I'm very interested in that particular subject. It seems like the source of a lot of problems. Maybe we could find some way to make it stop. Things would go a lot better, I think. I'm drifting in & out of consciousness. Hopefully *out*. Permanently. He had some good lines. "We're all hustlers." "Respectability means under the covers." I agree, pretty much. His name was actually "Leonard Alfred Schneider." His parents were teenagers when they had him. His mom, "Sally," lied about being pregnant so his dad, "Mickey," would marry her — he did, then she divorced him. But not before they had a kid, "Lenny Penny." Everybody makes mistakes. Lenny's autobiography glosses over his youth with smirky scenes like learning to masturbate *("having my struggle with Satan")* & seeing his cousin having sex, which he could tell was a religious experience ("Oh God! Oh God!"). The one biography, by Albert Goldman, now out-of-print, has more. Mickey got Sally to watch the kid while he went away to college, but soon got a letter in the mail: "Dear Father, I'm very unhappy. I want you to come back." Lenny loved his dad! They'd play together & sleep in the same bed. But he was mostly watched by relatives who didn't like him, and for good reason. He was a little devil. *For what has been done to you, take vengeance*. There's a picture of him, radiating damage & isolation. As a kid he'd go to the movies & despair at the images of happy families. *"Oh God, the movies really did screw us up."* I agree. I hate movies. All that "love" — all fake. The human heart can't generate it. I'm so unhappy. He said that too. "You don't know anything about anybody but you. Just you live that thing. You always live alone." I've managed to improve on this, however. I don't live *alone*. I live *with bugs inside of me*. My companions, and friends. My *spouses*. There isn't any point to writing about anybody else. I couldn't know. I barely know about me. I don't. *I'll lay here writing & reporting* about the physical decay of my body up until the end of myself, the details, step by step as the virus becomes me, or I become dead, whichever comes first. It's *beautiful*. It's making me cry!! A boy & his virus: *a love STORY!* I keep reading about Lenny. Mickey remarried & became strict. *A struggle to master the chaotic female*. Lenny dropped out of 10th grade & ran away — to live on a farm with a childless couple named the Denglers. In his book he says he was always

(Illustration: Derek Erdman)

rushing to "hug" Mr. Dengler, who pushed him away. Mrs. Dengler called Lenny a "kissing bug." I had to look that up. It's a blood-sucking insect. He asked them to adopt him. They said no. At age 17 he joined the Navy. World War II was raging. On his military I.D. (reprinted in his book) Lenny is fat & stupid-looking, *unfathered male flesh*, standing against a scale that puts him at 5'6" if you count his hair. He was assigned to a cruiser where (Goldman says) he "told jokes and clowned around and put on an act like he was a queer." Suddenly, I don't want to go on. Lenny wanted out too. He says in his book he was discharged from the Navy for dressing in drag. ("Do you enjoy wearing women's clothing?" "Sometimes." "When is that?" "When they fit.") Goldman says Lenny went into the shower & started grabbing guy's dicks & saying he was a faggot. After a "terrible scene" (?) they sent him packing. I unpack the other books. *The Trials of Lenny Bruce*, a recent study of his legal troubles by two lawyers, goes with Lenny's version. I find their email & write — & go to sleep.

Mickey wanted Lenny to follow in his footsteps & become a podiatrist, an amazing obliviousness to the coiled-up energy of his son: anxious, *agitated, intelligent*, REALLY MESSED UP. Lenny wanted, naturally, to be a movie star. Living with his dad in California, he went to a drama school & became absorbed into Hollywood culture. He & his dad fought & Lenny moved to New York, to live with his mom. He won a drama contest playing Hamlet drunk & did a variety of amateur hour performances, so nervous he'd barf all over the men's room. "Wobbling onstage," Goldman says, "virtually paralyzed with fear, he clutched the mike for support and began babbling at an incomprehensible clip." Lenny's first stage name was "Mickey Schneider" — which is something. Oedipal. I'm shivering. Lenny got into comedy because of his mom, and got laughs for all the wrong reasons. "When he opened his mouth," Goldman says, "the voice that emerged was so breathy and adenoidal, every head shood in amused condescension." Lenny tried to get an agent who said no ("He was just too inhibited and stiff, sort of *Shakespearean*"). In 1948 he got on a TV talent show with bizarre imitations of Hollywood stars but he was still nothing. He'd get portraits done of himself posing like a classic Hollywood star, except faggy & stupid. One of the lawyers writes back. Goldman's book, he says, is "exaggerated or in some instances false." Lenny's story of exiting the Navy "seemed plausible enough so we stuck with it." I don't know what to think. All these people are dead. *I order all the books,* magazine articles & & DVDs & CDs. There was a feature documentary in 1999, *Swear to Tell the Truth,* not on video but I find it on YouTube. Sally says Lenny was "a melancholy child." He was "always attracted to the bizarre." They'd read *Sexology* magazine together. When he was 12, she took him to see strippers. *Why would she do that?* I think she worried early on he was a fag. "Lenny grew up free," she says. "He was free. Guiltless. No guilt, like me." I'm pretty sure that when you do something bad, you have guilt — and I wonder, why is she denying having guilt, unless she has it? All sources are, at this point, suspect. I'm reading *The Essential Lenny Bruce,* the (out-of-print) transcription of his routines, generally acknowledged to be autobiographical on subjects like his marriage & child. Fragments of lives wander across the pages, like the guy "who was thrown out for looking over the lockers at the other guys and taking showers with his underwear on." *Was that him?* Late in Goldman's book, Lenny tells a lawyer about "when he was in the Navy and having his first homosexual experiences." I feel like my mind is coming apart, a little bit. *The aim of all sexual impulse is to reconstruct a lost family.* It's really a crucial moment, for me, I feel. I realize — I've spent much of my life studying the pages of books for answers, about people, but the pages are deceptive. They don't say that much. I want to go back to writing about *me*, a subject about which I am the most authoritative liar. This entity, "Lenny Bruce," is so profoundly concealed — as all men are, as I am to myself. Do these words I write now have any meaning, directly, about me? Do *you* learn anything? In a pamphlet Lenny sold at concerts, *Stamp Help Out* (reprinted in *The Almost Unpublished Lenny*

Bruce), there's a long sketch about a boy dancer named 'Arnold' who "chose show business because it was best for him since he was so obviously Nellie" — I bet 'Arnold' is *Leonard*. "Like drug addicts, Arnold's homosexual traits were environmental. He wasn't 'born that way'" — it's just "one summer in Atlantic City he came back a faggot." "At least I'm something," Arnold says. "I belong to a group. I share their notoriety, their problems, their laughter." The same story appears in Lenny's book except 'Arnold' is 'Horace': "Horace became a faggot simply because he wanted to belong." I feel — that's him too. Essentially, a blank. Goldman is clear that sources from New York in the early '50s viewed Lenny as "a real homosexual rather than a feigned one." "*Where Lenny?*" was the gag. "Off in Morocco suckin' some sailor's cock," was the reply. Lenny, for his part, says that by age 25 he'd slept with around 400 women. I just think he's lying. But I don't know. While he was in the Navy, Sally hooked Lenny up with a married female friend — at one point, Lenny was desperate to marry her. Sally said no. I think they both knew. Something. The books seem to close themselves. I have the overwhelming impression of a sick man. Sicker than me. I put him away. I'm so tired.

LOTS of Lenny CRAP has come in the mail & mostly to fill up the silences of my room, I put on some of the CDs. He wasn't that funny. He can't go for five minutes without talking about faggots. There's a Dracula who, you start to realize, isn't sucking *necks;* there's a Lone Ranger who's unmasked as a fag (he wants Tonto "to perform an unnatural act" — and Silver too). Prisoners in a prison break turn out to be — faggots! In one of his more famous routines, "How to Relax Your Colored Friends at Parties," Lenny plays a white guy talking to a black guy, making a bunch of oafish racial references before asking to see the black guy's dick (*"Whatthehell, just whip it out there"*) and inviting the guy over to his house, after dark. For Nat Hentoff, Lenny's champion in the media, the point of the sketch was "how very little casual social relationship exists between Negroes and the most enlightened white liberals." But it's basically about "interest in black guy's dicks." Lenny talked about them a lot. In the first sentence of his book & frequently in his routines he quotes Tennessee Williams describing them as "like a baby's arm with an apple in its fist." My body is still gripped by a fever that won't break. My belly is swelling with hepatitis. I decide to fast. *I'm no longer eating.* But Lenny Bruce is still inside me, somehow. I pick up the books again. In 1951 he was set to leave on a new naval venture, a stint in the Merchant Marines, which feels to me like a replaying of his history, which means, a returning to the same place to start over. The facts are: he was set to leave, one early morning in Baltimore, and strolled into a cafe dressed in "a slim-fitting tuxedo, pleated white-on-white shirt, and pencil-thin black tie," with a showgirl on each arm, and caught the attention of "Hot Honey Harlowe," a startling creature herself, with long red hair, curvy body & a face sweet but catty. Lenny looked over at her and saw "the Virgin Mary and a $500-a-night whore" - and somehow, fell in love. In 1976, *Playboy* published her memoir, the tale of a 'liberated woman', now out of print. I read the *whole thing*. Honey was sexy early. Her religious mom went nuts making sure she was still a virgin, so Honey ran off with some boys (one raped her) & they ended up robbing places. She was thrown in jail, raped by some lesbians, and spent time in solitary, where she saw madness as "a hungry wolf circling the edges of a campfire" and learned a big lesson: "No Matter How Strong You Are, There Is Always Another Level of Power." Once out she cycled through a few husbands, realized she didn't like sex, worked as a stripper, then met "Iris," a rich lesbian, and decided to try that. The *Lenny* movie is lying. Honey was into chicks way before he came along. The lesbian passages ("I exploded in her mouth in total, exquisite abandonment, holding onto her as she continued to drink and soak up my woman's nectar") are probably ghostwritten; I lay back wondering who Honey was, and why she went for *him*. "Lenny was so handsome," she says, "all I could do was smile." I think she responded to his feminine. Lenny left for the high seas, but "something unusually emotional was happening to me," he says. "I found that the longer I stayed away from Honey Harlowe, the more involved I became with her." I know that feeling - like you're no longer alone in the world. He cut short his Merchant Marine stint & returned to marry her. "Lenny was pretty unsure of himself, you know, boyish," she tells Goldman. I bet he was terrified. 'Honey' - what many men call their wives - is just one little letter away from 'Money'. She was used to a life of lesbian luxury & he didn't have the skills to support her. The life of crime began. He turned to con jobs, like getting paid to mow lawns & splitting, or an elaborate scam as a priest ("Brother Mathias") taking donations for a *leper colony*. He says he kept only part of the money. I'm sure he kept it all. In his later comedy he's big on leprosy, as a source of humor (body parts falling off, etc.), noting the connection to Christ, who cured lepers, with an undetone that Lenny himself was a leper. When his skin broke out in drug-induced rashes, he'd joke about "picking it," the phrase he'd use in bits about leprosy, like he'd became a leper to himself. The Brother Mathias scam ended soon after: out driving, he & Honey were hit by a truck. Thrown from the car, Lenny looked up to see her being run over- running over, he threw himself down on her & began praying: "Oh dear God, how ashamed I am...fallen into the mold which I despise, I am the image of the men I hate, the debauched degenerate that all men are who only in last resort find religion." I read those words over & over, before realizing - he's talking

to *himself.*

After the first day of a fast your hunger is mostly gone & a strange energy seeps into your body — & in a whirl I'm whipping up contacts, leads, interviews, for my Lenny profile!!! I'm going to break it wide open. Goldman's book (all 661 pages) is boring me, curiously distant & literary. I'm DIGGING into the sources. I'm poised for revelation. Once in L.A. Lenny met a guy named Richard Shackleton, "Shack," whom he worked with for years — one of Goldman's main sources, but quoted very little. *I've located him.*

"I knew Lenny for years and years and we were good friends," Shack sighs, "and spent a lot of time together, but I always knew that I never really knew him, or what he felt, or what he was really thinking. He was a very complex, extremely wounded, guarded person. I don't think anybody ever really knew him, including himself."

I'm really stunned.

Shack worked on early drafts of Lenny's book. "Ninety-nine percent of the shit that Lenny wrote was just fabricated lies," he says. "He guarded who he was because he probably didn't know, or he was ashamed, or he couldn't put it into words because he was so conflicted — but there's a big part of his life that was a void. I don't think Goldman got anything from anyone. Goldman was a very superficial guy. He's a predator. I doubt there was much that was really emotional and sensitive about Lenny, but I've never really read anything that was sensitive about him. He was not the kind of person who was dealt with as a sensitive, feeling human being. I was a firm believer that nobody could ever come near capturing who he was."

He's never seen the movie.

"The last thing in the world I'd want to sit through would be *Dustin Hoffman* playing Lenny Bruce."

I ask about Lenny & Honey, together.

"That was always something I tried to figure out," Shack sighs. "It was very mysterious. I don't think anybody ever knew. There was nothing in it you could ever say was good, when I knew them. When I met them they had just come here but at that time they were in great conflict, great turmoil, were together, apart, together, apart, until she got pregnant. During the time she was pregnant he was out of town most of the time. When he came back, he seemed to be angry about it. I don't know why."

Shortly after getting to L.A., both Lenny & Honey started doing heroin. Lenny started her on it, to his lasting guilt, and wanted her to stop — even as he felt free to continue. And the more he tried to make her stop, the more she continued.

I'm really getting crazed. Were they *sexual?*

"They weren't into fucking at all," Shack says. "They were into shooting heroin."

Did they *ever* have a sexual relationship?

"I don't know. I never knew them when they first got together. They obviously— It was a heavy emotion that played between the two of them, but I don't know. The drug was becoming a major part of their lives and there was really nothing going on between the two of them. He had all his junkie lovers, the musicians, and she was pretty much a loner. She used to come by our place every day on her way to work. Very conflicted and sort of lost. She didn't know anybody here. I think she had major problems. What those problems were, I don't know. I think she was very conflicted sexually. I think she was probably— I would make the assumption that she was not sexual at all. I would assume that she had so many major problems, and she self-medicated so heavily with alcohol and heroin, that her whole life really was spent trying to take away the pain, whatever that pain was."

I ask if Lenny ever had a good time around a woman, at all — leading up to the *big one!!*

"It would be extremely interesting to know what he thought about women," Shack says. "In my experience, as far as women were concerned, he seemed to be extremely immature. From that, and witnessing that, I'm pretty sure he was not capable of having a relationship with a woman that was not overwhelmingly tainted by his feelings and memories of being raised by his dancing teacher mother when he was a young boy in New York."

"The impression you get from Goldman's book," I say, "is that Lenny was happiest around his male companions."

"He lived in a fantasy world," Shack says. "He had a lot of elaborate fantasies. He had three phases of reality of his life. The reality of being sober, the reality of being high on heroin, and the reality of the overwhelming pain of withdrawal from the drug. He went through those three periods constantly. He was probably never happy, ever. But I think the person he spent time with that he was not threatened by was himself. Otherwise he felt threatened by every walking, living, breathing thing."

Was he a sexual person at all?

"Ummm. No. I don't think he was a sexual person at all."

"Lenny," I note, "seemed to have girlfriends around the country. Do you think he enjoyed himself with them?"

"I don't know. The only time I ever saw him have sex, or was around him when he had sex, it was always with extremely complicated, aberrant females, either bisexual hookers or junkie chicks or straight hookers. I never saw him ever become seductive with any straight-line female. When I traveled with him, that was the last thing on his mind — getting laid — but the first thing on his mind was finding a dealer. I also know that I spent years with him and I never, ever deluded myself that whatever he was telling me was the truth, or that I understood him, because I knew that I didn't understand him. I didn't understand anything about him, ever."

"Did that bother you?"

"No. I wasn't looking to have an in-depth, emotional relationship with him."

"Did he have that with anybody?"

"I can only make an assumption — there must've been something extremely powerful when he first hooked up with Honey."

"Do you think he was homosexual?"

"*Ummmmm,*" Shack replies. "That, I— used to wonder about. He had a saying, he said it a lot, 'I'm so frustrated I think I'll go suck off an old man.' But if he was homosexual, or bisexual, I *don't* think he would say that. I drew the conclusion that he was not homosexual, he wasn't bisexual, he wasn't heterosexual. He was totally asexual. That's not uncommon for talented people. Their talent comes from the overwhelming fact of their trying to deal with conflict, which I think was with him from the moment he woke up to the moment he went to bed."

NEXT ISSUE: Lenny on the attack

"His treatment of the audience was dual and at times sadistic—he charmed and lured them, then attacked them or undermined their sense of safety and stability." - Camille Paglia

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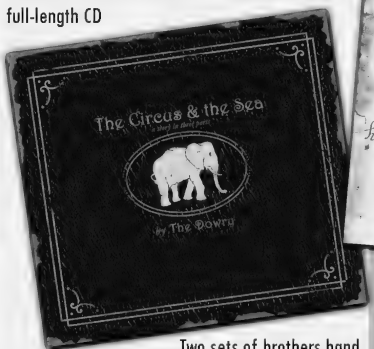

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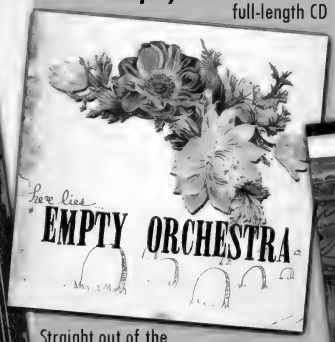

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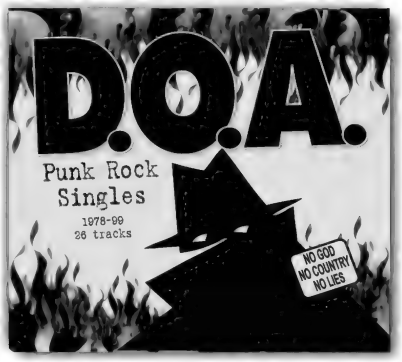

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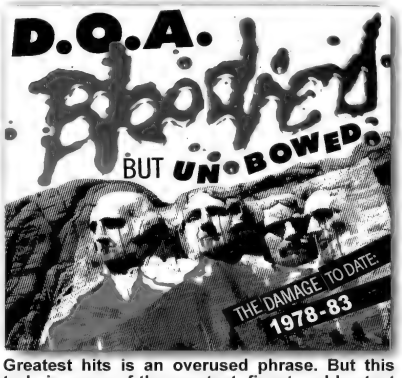

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IF YOU CAN'T TAKE THE HEAT GET OFFA THE PLANETS

The TALLY TALIAFERRO Interview

The problem with some 1970s punk bands is that it's fairly easy to track down the information, but unless you were there when it happened, it's harder to track down the sounds. Any fan of older archival music knows its' usually the other way around; you might find an obscure record, but you won't know the story behind it. But when punk came along, there were a lot of fanzines that documented it as it went down, plus the occasional magazine like *Rock Scene* or *Creem*. Looking back at old issues of *Rock Scene*, it wasn't unusual to see stories on Television, Patti Smith or the Ramones before they started making records. But for every band like these, there'd be the occasional act like Pure Hell or the Mumps who cut one or more microscopic 45's, or one unreleased LP, or even one track on a compilation album like *Live At Max's Kansas City*. But you had a chance to know all about them before you heard note one, you may have seen a story in *New York Rocker* or *Trouser Press*.

And this is where the Planets come in. Led by guitarist/Who fanatic Binky Phillips, they were originally formed in 1971 under the name of Second Hand Smoke, they had one unreleased demo originally meant for a Warner Bros. album that never came out. But their mix of punk raunch and Anglo-pop dynamics had people talking for years, with the prediction that this would be one of the major bands to emerge from the CBGB's/Max's circuit. The record labels were waving contracts in faces, and everyone assumed it would be a matter of time before they rocked arena stages like the Dictators & Ramones (albeit as opening acts).

Unfortunately, their time never came - while there were several bands like this scattered across the US if you looked hard enough, very few 1970's mod-pop bands who were interracial. While mixed-race bands were fairly common by this time, usually the black members of the band were at the back of the stage playing bass or drums (Little Feat or the Allman Brothers Band come to mind). The Planets had the black bassist (the late Anthony Jones), but the other African-American member was the lead singer/frontman...a former boy soprano and folk singer by the name of Tally Taliaferro, who had replaced a white member who was around earlier. Although Thin Lizzy was already starting to make headway with black Irishman Phil Lynott (who played bass AND was the upfront lead singer), there were quite a few people on the NY rock scene who thought that having a black lead singer in a rock band was a serious liablity. Unfortunately, the Planets' manager felt the same way, and this led to Taliaferro's departure. He wasn't down for long - after some time in the woodshed, he rebounded with the Heat, who at least got to make a record for Polydor (home of Taliaferro's hero James Brown). It was only a solitary single, but unlike the Planets, at least their record was released. Around this same time (ca. 1979), *Trouser Press* magazine did a story on the post-Ramones rock scene in New York, and quite a bit of space was devoted to the Heat, complete with a photo (apparently, quite a few *TP* staff members were Planets/Heat fans; or maybe it was because they were managed by one of the editors, Dave Schulps). Interestingly enough, after the experience with the Planets, Taliaferro wanted this to be an all-black band, but that was quickly put to rest; when he asked black rock guitarist Strider Moonbeam if he wanted in, Moonbeam supposedly replied "I won't play with black people; I can't get along with them in a band." After the Heat and the Planets took turns reforming, Taliaferro went to Michigan for a spell and reemerged in New York as a folksinger, even returning in the early 90s back to CBGB's where he began (which by now had an acoustic room dubbed the CBGB's Canteen).

In the past few years, the Planets and the Heat have reformed yet again, rocking around the NYC. In one sweet burst of serendipity, when CBGB's recently closed, during one of the final weeks they had the original performers return for one final fling. And that included both the Planets and the Heat, closing the circle. While Taliaferro admits to some past bitterness at the back-office politicking that stood in the Planets' way, he's kept his wits about him, as he appears to have a positive, unjaded outlook on how the whole thing went down. As he remarks, "It got to the point where I didn't care if a million people heard any songs that I was singing on or that I had written. The idea was for me to write the song, although I don't have the financial success."

The Planets' demos still remain in a storage vault; just like back in the day, unless you're in New York, you might not hear the song, but you can still read the story. We gave you a taste of it in our black punk roundup of a few years ago (you can see an updated version on www.roctober.com), but now here's Tally's tale...

Roctober: So is it true you started as a boy soprano with one of New York's top boys choirs?

Tally Taliaferro: A kid got put out of my fourth grade class. I went & told my grandmother and the teacher told her "he's going to sing in a choir," so they let me go. It turned out to be the Brooklyn Boys Choir and I sang with them for a while. I did some work at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in Lincoln Center four times.

R: What year was this?

TT: In the fifth grade I was ten, so '63. That was a great experience.

After that, where to?

I kept singing. Singing became my life. I sang into high school with some college people from college choirs. My voice changed, so then I became a tenor all the way up into high school. I was taking violin lessons as well. I switched to rock & roll, going back to when the Beatles came out. I put down the violin & picked up the electric guitar.

Being in the choir, I'm sure that you were considered a natural for

the role of lead singer.
I could sing naturally. It's interesting that when I look back at musicians who I worked with, and a lot of them can just walk in a room, especially Binky (Phillips, guitarist with the Planets) and just play magnificently. I always took it as a gift, but I respect it now that that's my thing.

So what bands did you play in for the remainder of the sixties?
I was into a bunch of garage high-school bands...I went to college, I dropped out of college to become Bob Dylan because I had discovered Richie Havens in high school as well. And I wanted to become a folkie. Bob Dylan did a whole bunch of coffeehouses in Manhattan and everything...oddly enough, I met Binky Phillips, we both worked at the **Entered** Church Center, this was in the early seventies. There was this guy walking around with blond hair and a dyed Saturn in his hair. He had on two-tone satin pants and boots with stars all over them. Oddly, he thought he was the cool person in the building. And I thought *I* was the cool person in the building, because I had on green suede shoes and green corduroy pants. We used to see each other in the elevator, just look at each other, like up and down, like not speak to each other. After a month, one day he said hello and then we started talking about music. I told him, "Oh, I'm buying a Stratocaster," and he told me "Well, I'm looking for a lead singer." "Oh, I sing!" He said - and this is the oddest ting, to this day - he said "go home, look up the ad in the (Village) *Voice*, and it's for this band called the Planets." I found the ad, called them up, I went to the studio, and they said "what do you know?" From my high school band I knew "All Right Now" by Free and that was that. I was in the band. 1 song, 1 rehearsal. Guess he was desperate *(laughs)*!

Let me back up a bit. As a young African-American, how did you gravitate towards rock instead of soul?
I went to a prep school, **Stuyver** School For Boys, which is now coed, so this was during the "token black" era, where they're sending a whole bunch of high-level black kids into prep schools with scholarships. I was one of them, so all of a sudden I'm in this community. I was one of two black kids in a private school with 250 students. I remember listening to Gladys Knight and the Temptations and Curtis Mayfield - those were my records. And this was during workstudy; this kid was playing something LOUD and I couldn't study. I could bully people on the fact that I was black and from New York. It was like, "HEY, TURN THAT WHITE-BOY MUSIC OFF!" and he says, "this isn't white-boy music." And he hands me the first Jimi Hendrix album! "Turn it off anyway!" And I went back there the next day and I said "what were you playing?" And I just sat there and I looked at this album. At that point, compared to the Temptations and all that stuff, I didn't understand it. It sounded like noise to me. Little by little, I remember going back, I said, "hey, could you play me another song?" and I just became influenced by that. I came home, and my best friend, who was my mentor, he studied a lot of Dylan. I kept going like, "well, who wrote this song?" "Dylan." "Who wrote that song?" "Dylan." "You mean that guy, he can't sing..." "Dylan." "Well, who do you think is best?" He was a little older: "Dylan." Omigosh, I started listening to Dylan. And then I went to a Rolling Stones concert in '72 and that did it *(laughs)*! I lived and breathed rock & roll, and actually if you talk to people who've seen a lot of Stones concerts, they say that concert at the (Madison Square) Garden in 1972 was the best ever and Mick had something to prove. That Tuesday night, I couldn't go to work the next day, and I've been rocking ever since. I was always into records and I was listening to the Who and I learned how to play the "Young Man Blues" right before I ran into Binky who is documented as the #1 Who freak in the world. When the Who put out their (book) anthology for their 20th anniversary, they gave him three pages as the #1 Who fan.

When you saw the Stones, was Stevie Wonder opening for them?
Yes. Yes, yes! It took an hour before the Stones came out, so there was this big hoopla and anticipation...the Stones came out and did a couple of songs, Stevie Wonder comes out...Jagger and Stevie Wonder were dancing and Jagger takes Stevie Wonder and spins him from one end of the stage to the other end of the stage, and its' like right near the edge of the stage! And he's just spinning...you know Stevie Wonder with his sunglasses and his head up in the air...just doing these spins from like *30 feet*! I thought he was gonna fall...it was so incredible. Obviously very planned...the three backup singers with Stevie came over and grabbed him...but at the same time, Jagger, who's portraying this sinister image, gives 'em a glare as he threw him...it was a great show.

So how did your rock image play in the hood?
I actually joined a band back in the hood and we used to do covers. Maybe my first gig was at the Pink Pussycat on 42nd street on Broadway. We learned a couple of Temptations songs. I really didn't know how to play, I think I knew three chords. That was it. Actually, people used to tell me "you speak different when you're in the 'hood." I guess I had converted like a chameleon. Actually, when I was in the hood, I would tell people about about what I was going through on the other side. All my friends were interested. It was *that time*, you know? It was a time of integration, so they were sort of interested. The hippies were about...some of my friends went to Woodstock *from* the hood. And I had to work, so I wouldn't go. So the walls were beginning to melt, and it was something new.

Did this band make any records?
No, no, we never made anything...no demos, no nothing.

What were you guys called?
I don't even remember *(laughs)*!

Okay, getting back to the Planets, when you met Binky in the elevator...
Our first gig was at CBGB's after maybe I rehearsed with them about five months? Our first gig was a split headline with the Ramones. CBGB's didn't have a PA, so Binky and Anthony Jones, who later went on to Humble Pie - he's now deceased - they had big **Hiwatt** cabinets. That was the PA system. Binky tells the story that he goes over to Joey and says "Hey, this is the PA. I'm sorry, but we're gonna have to use this." And Joey goes *(low voice)*: "Well, okay" *(laughs)*. He was always really nice.

So how did those first gigs go over?
They were great, sort of tense for me. The thing about performing is to know who your audience is. I didn't know who my audience was at that time. I was this new kid in this band that had had some reputation *(laughs)*, but I went over well. I wasn't greeted with open arms, but they couldn't argue with me because I could sing. It was like, *where did they get that guy from (laughs)*?

New York was filled with all sorts of oddities and extremities, so what were you doing that was so odd to them?
The Planets were sort of like a premier snotty band. They had a beautiful singer with long blond hair. All of a sudden, there's me. It was like, what? Even by friends of the band, it was like where did you get this guy from? Then I opened my mouth and everything was fine. It took me time to win people over. The Planets were sort of destined to be this band everyone knew they were gonna get signed...no one wanted to play with them because they were sort of rock & roll more than punk but they were so good that the clubs wanted them to play. All these companies were approaching the Planets to sign them and they were just holding out for the three major labels - Columbia, Warner Bros., and whoever else was around at that time. They turned down Mercury, they turned down RCA...*(people would say)* "how come you guys aren't signed?" "Well, we just turned down RCA." "WHAT!" (laughs) "We turned down Casablanca." "WHAT!" *(laughs)* COME ON! They were very snooty-tooty in reputation, because they could get up on stage and play like no one else; I happened to walk into it. Binky was the premier guitarist; Bowie wanted him, Kiss wanted him, Johnny Thunders would come over and go, "show me this and show me that." They were comparable musicians, they weren't just a garage band. Those guys were like connoisseurs, they knew the whole *Trouser Press* (magazine) scene. They studied all the back pages of *Trouser Press*. They didn't have to study because they were into it! And then *Trouser Press* came out and said "have you heard about the Move or the Herd or the Flaming Groovies," and the Planets were already into this stuff. I picked up on that, and it was like we were historical students of the Olde English rock & roll scene. That was the difference.

So what were the defined roles? Who did what in the band?
The Planets were set up like the Who. Binky was Pete Townshend, he wrote all the songs. The drummer didn't write. Anthony didn't write - you know, now and then. I also wrote, but I was sort of overshadowed by Binky, he was doing a great job. Actually, I became a student of

Binky. I learned a lot about writing and stuff, his style of writing. To step off from it: when I started the Heat, I became a black Binky Phillips in my eyes. I just took what I had seen, his whole presentation, and put it into the Heat - my version of him.

Back then, if you saw a black person in a mostly white rock band, they were usually in the back playing bass or drums. There weren't many black frontpeople like yourself.

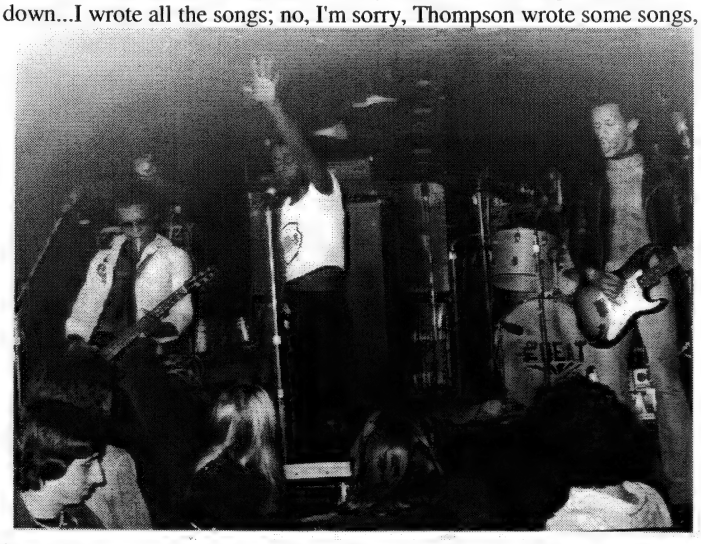
I can pull out examples going back to forever about exceptions to the rule and everything, but as far as I'm concerned, on a conservative music business trip, I was trying to get through a door that really hadn't been opened. There was Arthur Lee from Love...

Garland Jeffreys?

...yeah, but Garland Jeffreys was a little bit middle-of-the-road. I don't know how he started out, but I'm talking about here-it-is, hit-you-in-your-face sort-of Rolling Stones rock & roll where the guy is black and the rest of the people in the band are basically white, although Anthony Jones was sort of mixed. And that had actually never been done before. I give Binky a lot of credit because back when *(the Planets' audience)* first saw me, it was like: what are you doing? Because as far as they were concerned, "you just jinxed the band! You're not gonna get signed!" That was the reason I left, because of some racial nonsense. I didn't get fired, but I got asked to leave. It was some other stuff going on but they used the racial card as an issue. Binky didn't use it, but the manager did, and I was sort of upset, but I had to remember 20-30 years later, like "wow, this guy took a chance on me!" Against some of his friends, some of the media people. For the standard of that day, he said, "hey, this guy can sing better than anybody else, I wanted him in the band!" Shortly after the whole Planets situation, a lot of people were telling Binky, "Hey, you guys are great, but you're never gonna go anywhere with that singer." Binky tried to break down that door, then after everything fell apart, then Prince came along. And to tell you the truth, the first time I saw Prince was on TV. I'm sitting in a living room, and Prince did not start with an interracial band. My recollection is, I saw four guys in bikinis and platform shoes with nylons on, and I went "What in the world is this?" That was Prince doing "I Wanna Be Your Lover." And the next time I see Prince, he has a mixed band behind him. Prince did open that door, but mind you, there's a genre card here - there's a straight guy and maybe a gay guy, and there's a difference. As far as I'm concerned, and a lotta people say that I'm crazy, but the fact that I'm straight, black and masculine is offensive, so a lot of companies are like "uh-oh"...they didn't want me out in Omaha! They knew what I was gonna do! (I'd have to) soften the masculine image *(like Prince did)*. I'm gonna say this because I don't have anything to lose - I'm of the feeling, as I'm talking to you today, that if you're not giving up any booty, whether you're black or white you're not making it! It wasn't my thing! I don't have anything against it, but...I had a big producer they flew in from Europe (to see the Heat, his next band). I played for him at Max's Kansas City and after the first set I went down and said, "Stay around for the second set, it gets better!" We played like thirty songs and we were killin' because we had practiced to a T. "What are you doing after the show?" I gotta move the equipment! "What are you doing after that?" I'm going home to go to sleep! "Call me tomorrow!" So I called Polygram Records the next day, and said, "Well, where is this guy?" "Oh, he's on a plane back to England *(laughs)*!" It wasn't about the music, it wasn't that I wrote a good song, it wasn't that I was black or white, it was just that, hey, are you gonna...you know, "play on the team." I'm sort of grateful about my life now...I was sort of bitter because it seemed for the longest time everybody who came out of CBGB's got signed...I got signed with the Heat, I didn't get signed with the Planets...it hurts, I'm happy that some people are in the Hall of Fame, but it hurts! The student that is most likely to succeed does not succeed. But had I made it, I don't think I'd be alive today (laughs).

Let's back up & talk about the Heat - that was another interracial band, as you had an Asian musician in the lineup.

I was dismissed from the Planets and I was depressed. I couldn't really go to another band. I was too popular in a way - "oh, this is the guy from the Planets, we don't want him" - so I said, I'm gonna start my own band. I took a year off from work and I just played every day. I had the material, I had a record collection, so I just played every day and I wrote a set of songs. In the Planets we used to keep ourselves barricaded, like we're the Beatles in the dressing room, and all of a sudden there's this black guy in the dressing room going "hey, I love you guys" and it was like: *where did you come from? How did you get here? (laughs)* And he just had balls. And his name was Dwight Thompson, he used to show up at all the gigs and we became friends. I ran into him one day, him and his friend, I said, you know, I want to start a band and I want you to be in it. His friend, who I had met once before, I said, you know what, you could do it too! I'll give you guys a call! We started rehearsing in my living room, wherever we could. Thompson found a Japanese drummer who didn't speak any English and I just told him to speed up, slow down...I wrote all the songs; no, I'm sorry, Thompson wrote some songs,



he wrote a great song called "Nazi Dyke," a great punk song. I went to the manager of the Planets and said to her, let me open for the Planets the next time you do Max's. "Well, let see your band." We did a showcase, she came down, and the next thing we're opening for the Planets and people are going like, "WHAT!" The ex-Planet lead singer? And they didn't know me as a guitarist! At that time, I couldn't play anything.

Just when they got used to having a black guy up front, you went and bailed on 'em!

They didn't know what to expect, but we were so good I think we blew them away.

Who did they replace you with in the Planets?

A guitarist named Jeff Lowe. He was very, very, very good. When I had been dismissed, it was like a little bit of planetary fallout. I didn't know that I would be missed. A lot of the Planets fans, they didn't boycott any shows or anything, but it was like, why did you let him go? *(As far as the Heat)* We recorded a single for *(US)* Polygram *(around '79)* - at the time, I felt like, yeah, me and James *(Brown)* on Polygram Records *(laughs)*! We *(also)* put out a lot of independent singles, I think there was maybe four or five. We stayed together for a while, and I was thinking of getting Anthony Jones to be the lead singer. I'm standing out in the sun of the music building where Madonna and everybody used to rehearse, and I see Binky walking down the street. He walked down the street and he said, "I wanna know if you wanna play bass for me." I was like, oh, the Heat's not doing anything right now, so I left the Heat and went over to the Planets for a couple of years and that fell through so I reorganized the Heat. And now we do shows together (laughs)! I somehow ended up in Michigan and became a folkie again.

What year did the Planets reform?

I'm not sure of the year, but I've been with them for eight years now.

In the meantime, any plans to release the Planets' demos?

Binky is the only one who has the masters, and they're in storage somewhere. Ira Robbins (from *Trouser Press*) has been trying for years and years to give him the tapes so he can put out the Planets' album. Binky is sort of hesitant *(laughs)*, I don't know why, but I've been telling him, "Binky, please put this stuff out so I can give it to my grandchildren!"

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"...almost sounds like Alice Cooper and Iggy had a kid together. This ain't no straight edge disc..." - Profane Existence Magazine

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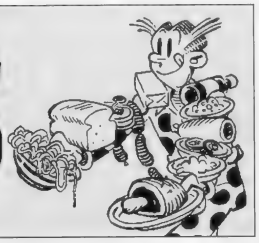
COMIC STRIP CLASSICS



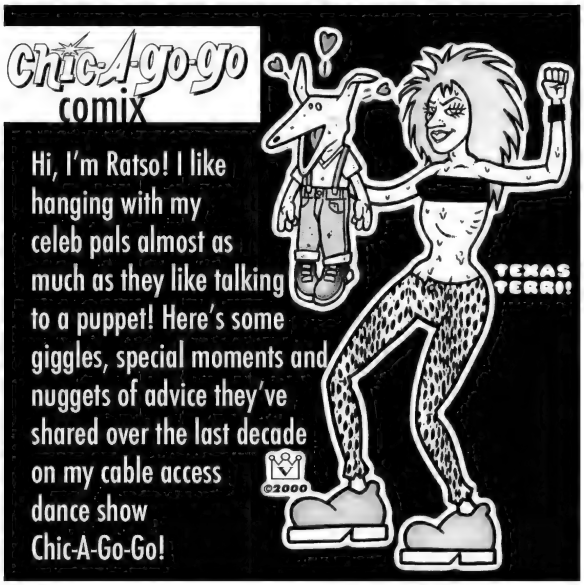
HAMZIG in 'The Tiny Terror Of Trolltown'

By King Merinuk

WORLD WAR IX: PEOPLE I'M GLAD I DON'T PLAY IN A BAND WITH

BY JUSTIN MELKMANN
CHECKOUT WORLDWARIX.COM

THE MANY MOODS OF MURRY WILSON



Ratso meets the Donnas (by Jessica Abel)

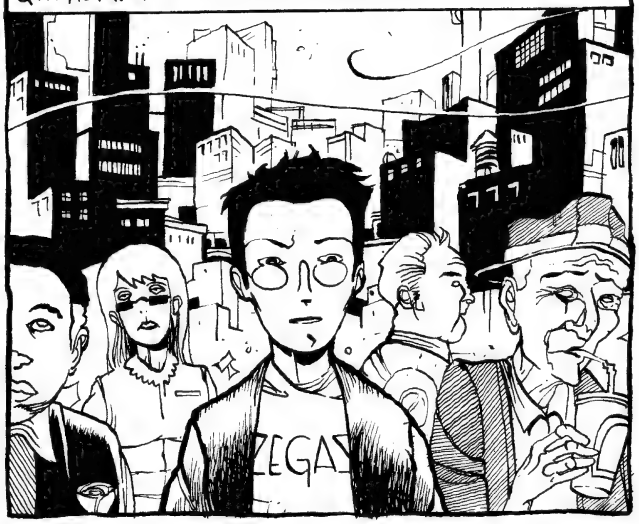
Lil' Ratso and Miss Mia meets TV on the Radio (by Brian Ralph)

Ratso! Wait til you hear who my new Myspace friend is...
What!
You use Myspace!?! That makes you a puppet tool to Rupert Murdoch - Myspace's fascist corporate Master!
Well... how do you let people know what you're up to? Texting?
TEXTING!
DON'T YOU KNOW THE U.S. GOVERNMENT MONITORS ALL WIRELESS TRANSMISSIONS!
What about Xeroxing a zine?
XEROX! That corporation is owned by the Klan!
Is that true?
I DON'T KNOW! But that's my point! You NEVER KNOW!!!
Well if you don't trust anything how do you get the word out?
I've got that covered my friend!
This is called going "old school!"...
You better hope Al Gore doesn't hear about this...

DEAR MR. PEKAR,

MY NAME'S MICHEL FIFFE AND I'M AN ASPIRING COMIC BOOK ARTIST TRYING TO MAKE IT INTO THE BIG TIME COMICS INDUSTRY. I DRAW DURING THE DAY AND WORK NIGHTLY AT THE CLUB "KNITTING FACTORY."

I DECIDED EARLY IN LIFE TO WRITE and DRAW MY OWN COMICS. I MOVED FROM MIAMI, FL TO NEW YORK TO PURSUE THAT DREAM. I'VE BEEN HERE SEVEN YEARS, CONSTANTLY QUESTIONING WHETHER I'M WASTING MY TIME OR NOT.



I MET DEAN HASPIEL WHILE WORKING AT THE ST. MARK'S COMIC SHOP. HE NEEDED AN ASSISTANT TWO YEARS AGO AND I'VE HELPED HIM MEET DEADLINES SINCE. IT'S ALL GRUNT STUFF, BUT THE EXPERIENCE IS INVALUABLE.

DURING THE LAST LEG OF DRAWING "The QUITTER", DEAN SUGGESTED THAT I DRAW YOU TO SEE IF I HAD WHAT IT TOOK TO DO A COMIC WITH YOU. I WAS THRILLED.

AT AGE 11, I FOUND OUT ABOUT "AMERICAN SPLENDOR" WHEN I WAS WATCHING "COMIC CONFIDENTIAL" ON TV. I LIKED AND RELATED TO THE STORY YOU READ, THE ONE ABOUT THE ADDICTION OF COLLECTING.*

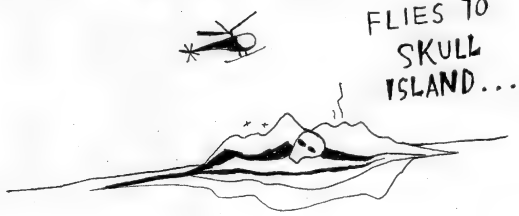
*"HOW I QUIT COLLECTING RECORDS..." with R. CRUMB

INCLUDED WITH THIS PAGE IS MY OWN COMIC "NIGHTCLUB", A SEMI-AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STORY. AFTER SEEING THIS PAGE, MR. **PEKAR**, DO YOU THINK THAT MAYBE... UM.. Y'KNOW... MAYBE I CAN.. UH... DRAW SOMETHING FOR--

The Rockin' Ace

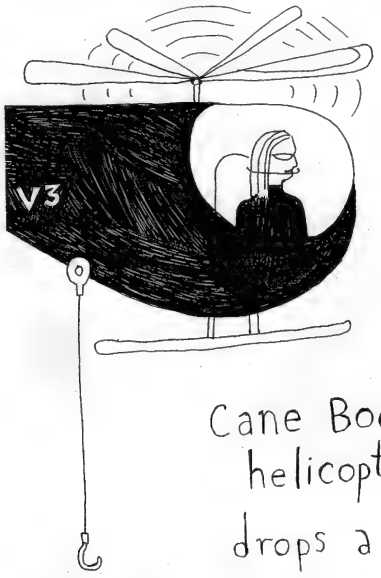
by Slink Moss

VOL.3.NO.9



1.

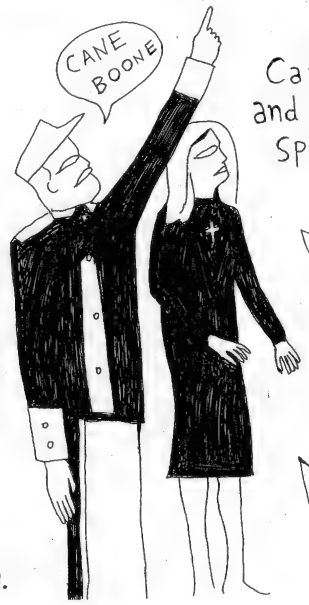
2.



Cane Boone's helicopter drops a line.

3.

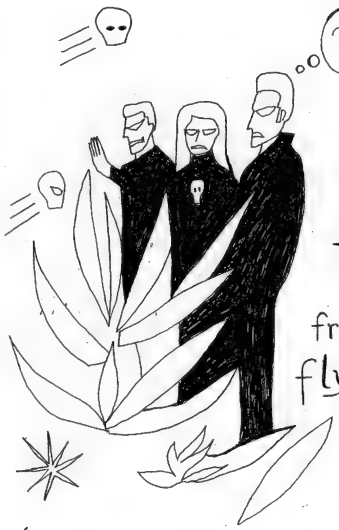
Hidden in the bushes of SKULL ISLAND, Captain Sam and Grace Hil Spot the helicop and.



4.

...ATTACK THE EVIL 3 with skulls.

5.

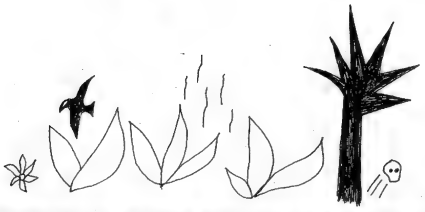


The EVIL 3 take cover from the flying skull

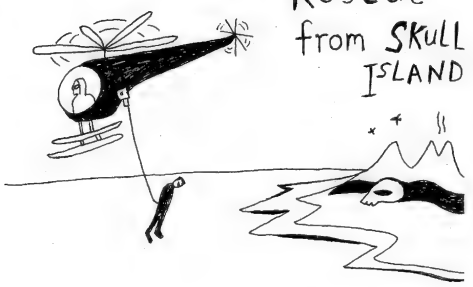
6.

as Ace is lifted out of the steaming jungle.

7.

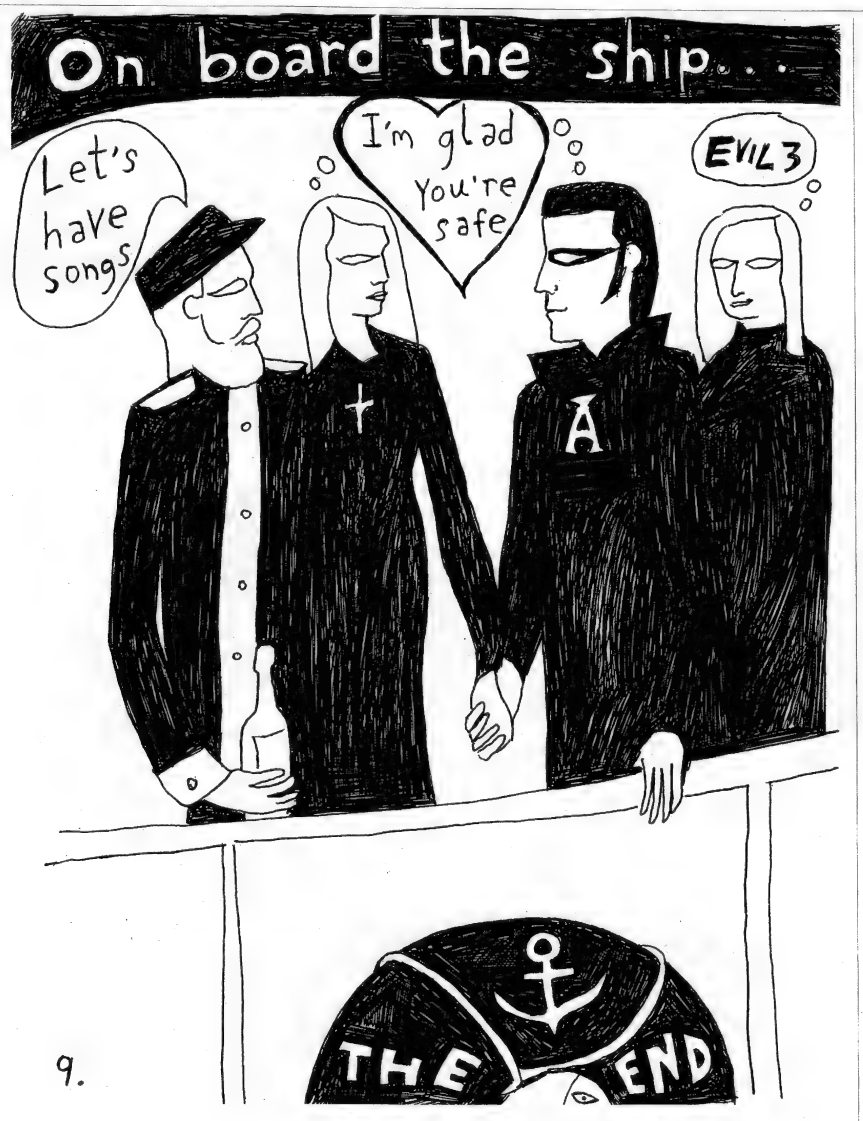


The Rescue from SKULL ISLAND



8.

On board the ship...



9.

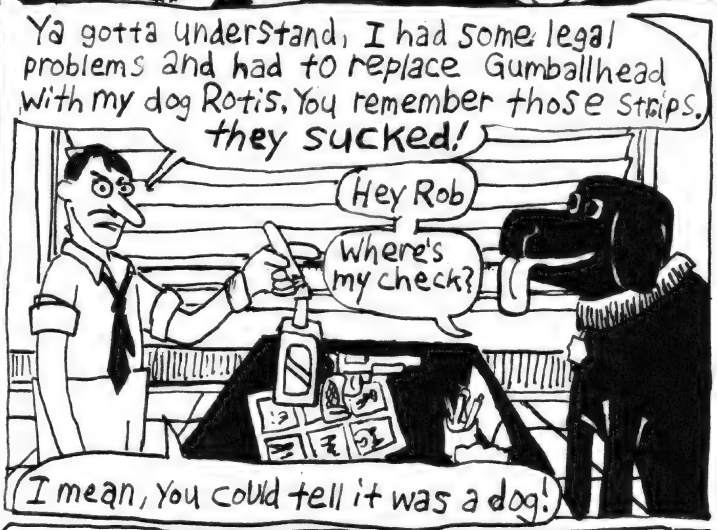
from the Offices of DETENTION ROOM FUNNIES

Beryn Illinois underground comix leader!

Our Motto "OFF model is on the money"

©2007 Rob Syers UP yours

Words: Rob Pencils: Johnny Carcinogen Inks: Chuck Reagan Assistant to Mr. Syers: Larry Tate



DETENTION ROOM FUNNIES

THE HEAD IN THE JAR PART FIVE: THE END OF THE END!

Thunkup and Cartooned by Thee RobSyers! (rhymes with "Pliers")

FEATURING GUMBALLHEAD THE CAT®

OK, Here's What's Going on... Gumballhead was decapitated in a minibike accident. His body is taken by Cheerleader Squad Zero, and kept alive with that device on his shoulders. His body is stolen by the crazy witch McCain, and again stolen by Dr. Clark Cilek! Gumdall's head is acquired by Dr. Lazar (seen here cowering behind Cheerleader Red). Gangster "Mr. Boathitch" wants Gummys head as a personal trophy, but his attempt to steel it is foiled by Dr. Cilek and his strange cult followers, who wish to use Gumballhead in a ritual involving the human sacrifice of teenager Riff Randhall! All hell breaks loose at the ritual as Gumballhead runs amok! Now, the Witch McCain has crashed the party With her Own headless corpse! ready to cause Chaos!

POP POP POP! POP POP!
HEE HEE HEE
Cheerleader Red sets her Raygun to "stun"...
Doctor, please keep standing there doing nothing!
But I...
I'll take care of this!
...OMB-BA-ACK!
ZAT!
Gumballhead grabs the cults ritual device...
NO! POW POWPOW
Chaos! Murder Each Other!
Put down the sacred sacrificial sword!
SMASH
Tell me cat!
Do you recognize my son? Your old friend?

Rorry McCain! You were responsible for his death*
Now he'll pluck you apart like a cooked chicken!
*From the "Gumballhead" comic. Rockin Rob
Do something Freya, shoot it, Shoot it!
I'll try, but I don't know if my raygun will have any effect on it!
It's really him. She made him a monster. She made Rorry McCain into a monster...
GO MY SON! Kill THEM ALL! HEE HEE HEE HEE HEE
CLANK
at least She took his club colors off.
The ancient sword is buried to its hilt into the hulking zombified body of Gumballheads dead biker friend
Mother and son are united once more...
AAARG!
...and explode into a puff of magic!
POOF
FLOP!
CLANG!

local crime boss "Mr. Boathitch sneaks into the Cilek Mansion!
Holy Jesus! I'm in way over my head! That cats coconut isn't Worth this Mess...
Riff, Get metal boys Gun.
I should just split, but I can't leave those chicks with the satan crew
Hi
You girls Ok?
Don't move you Sleeze Bags!
You girls are allright...right?
We're allright. Welcome to the Party.
These guys stripped my teenage Sister naked and tried to sacrifice her to thier dark god!
Boathitch, there is an agreement between Your "organization" and My ... "Group."
You Sick devil worshippin' FREAK! As of now, our agreement is Over!
You tried to kill a girl, a little fuckin girl!
I Should cap you right here in your fuckin' House... You FREAK!
If I die, Boathitch the F.B.I. will find Some interesting information about your organization
...and it will seem as if You supplied such information!
You bastard You rat freak Bastard!
OBOSH
BAM!

BEWARE!
THE OBOBOBEROM HAS BESTOWED GREAT POWER ON ME.
And the Oboboberom demands human sacrifice!
SMASH!
Uh.
Good Fuckin' Throw.
RIP!
SQUISH Squish Popplip
SSSSNAP GURRGLE GLUP
RUNCH!
HA HA!
COFF COFF HUUUUhhhh....
I'm taking these girls outta here. Anyone makes a move and you're DEAD!
I'll Fuckin' Kill You.
Boathitch, you did the right thing in the end, give me a cigarette and I won't kill you.
END!
Rob Syers 2007©

epilogue

Outside Dr.Cilek's creepy fuckin' mansion...

Words Pencils: Bossman. inks: Reagan.

Here's a jump suit so you can cover your naked teenage body.

Jumpsuits are uncool! Don't you have a speed suit, those are cool!

I guess you could cut the sleeves off.

Hey Red!

While you're in the trunk, dig up some Duct Tape. My head's startin' to come loose.

How's that feel Kitty?

Good, thanks.

look, there's that Boathitch guy. He made it out O.K.!

Mr. Boathitch is in some deep shit with those guys now.

SOON, our heros are on the road...

Stop if you see a gas station or somethin', I need some smokes.

ZERO

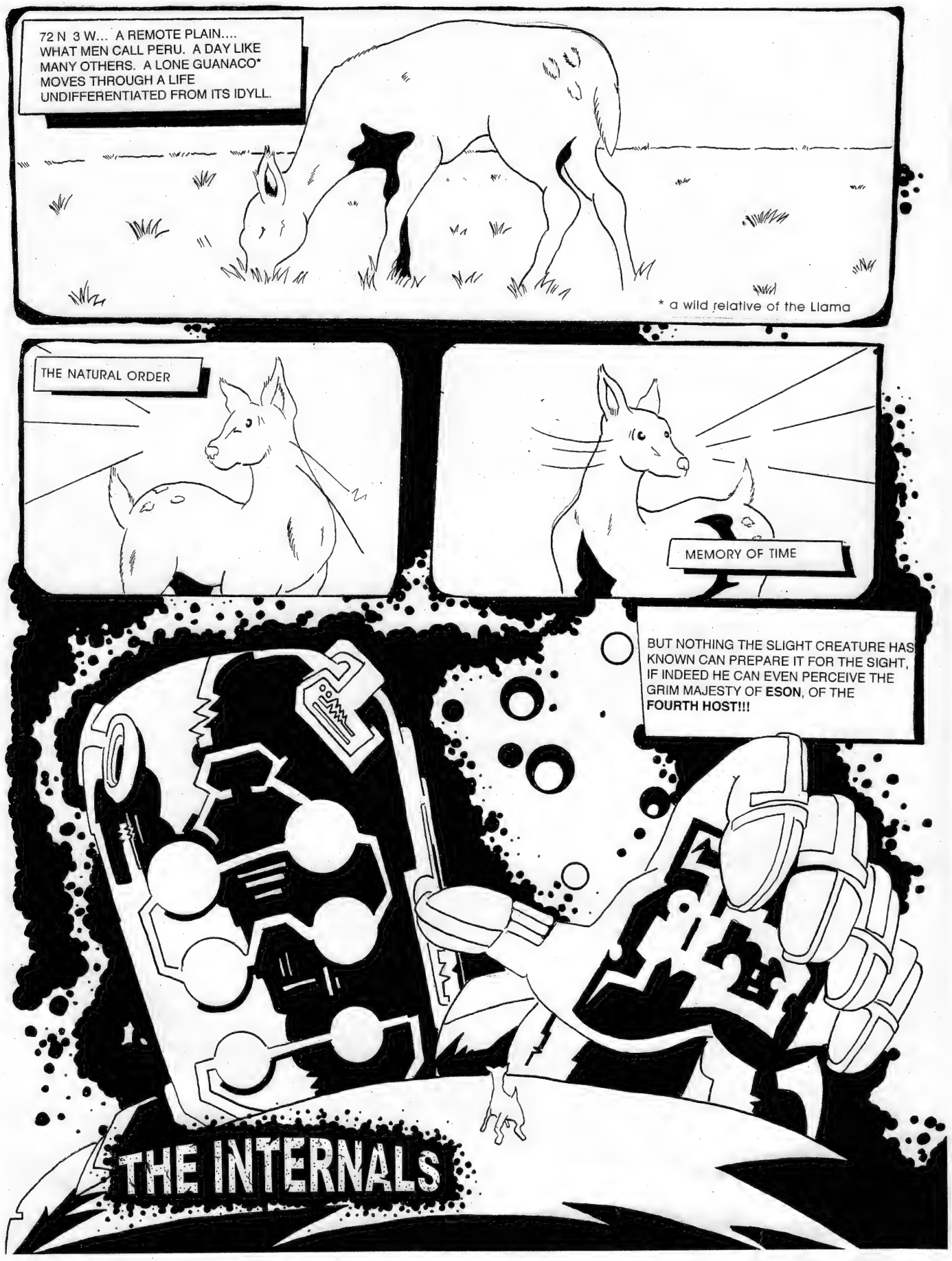
And, uh, you might wanna get me to a vet, my head's still pretty loose.

I don't wanna die again...

bein' dead really sucks

Oh, that Gumballhead, he's a fuckin' nut!

©Rob Syers 2007 Gumballhead the cat® motherfucker!


72 N 3 W... A REMOTE PLAIN.... WHAT MEN CALL PERU. A DAY LIKE MANY OTHERS. A LONE GUANACO* MOVES THROUGH A LIFE UNDIFFERENTIATED FROM ITS IDYLL.
* a wild relative of the Llama
THE NATURAL ORDER
MEMORY OF TIME
BUT NOTHING THE SLIGHT CREATURE HAS KNOWN CAN PREPARE IT FOR THE SIGHT, IF INDEED HE CAN EVEN PERCEIVE THE GRIM MAJESTY OF **ESON**, OF THE **FOURTH HOST!!!**
THE INTERNALS

AJAK! YOU CLAIM THESE GIANTS ARE ENLIGHTENED BEINGS- BUT LOOK **THERE**! ANOTHER BEAST BEING DESTROYED; REDUCED TO EXPERIMENT!!! HOW CAN **YOU**-
ENOUGH!!! DO NOT MAKE ME EXPLAIN IT **AGAIN**...THE WAYS OF **THE CELESTIALS** MUST NOT BE QUESTIONED. YOU HAVE NOT YET PENETRATED TO THE HEART OF **THE SOURCE TABLEAU!!!** IT TELLS THE STORY.
...SARAH...
I AM AWARE OF THE HISTORIES, AJAK, BUT I MUST REMIND YOU THAT YOUR NARRATIVE CAN HAVE NO MEANING,, TO A BEING DEFINED BY **LOVE**...
...MORTAL...

WRITTEN BY RIAN MURPHY & GENE BOOTH
LETTERED BY A. MACHINE

ILLUSTRATED BY Dr. GOLDBLATT
BASED ON THE WORK OF JACK 'KING' KIRBY

NEXT ISH... THE REASON WHY?!

FUNKARELICS

Pedro Bell has been a valued contributor to this magazine forever, and he has been a crucial contributor to P-Funk for over thirty years, creating the brilliant, Funkadelic gatefold LP covers in the seventies and eighties, and helping to influence the interstellar language, both visual and verbal, that made the Mothership such a mother. He is also now a fine *artiste*, having stolen the show at the MCA's recent rock n roll art exhibit. But before he left this realm for the P-universe he was an underground comix artist/rock critic /go-to-guy at his college paper (the *Roosevelt University Torch*) from 1972-1975, catching the tail end of the greatest era of college comix. A few Summers back our intern Chase catalogued and scanned hundreds of images from Pedro's early days, and we will share a few choice cutlets this issue. Rejoice! This issue we focus on a cartoon controversy sparked by a Mad Magazine-style piece that played around with comic stereotypes, the fallout is on these pages, cartoon follows:

Our readers write: (thus)

Gays demand apology

To the Editor:

Gay people for 4000 years have been the victims of oppression in many sectors of Western civilization. We have been set afire, hung, gassed, beaten, blackmailed, tortured, denied our civil rights, and have been the brunt of ill humor. No longer will we be coerced into this position. No more will we be shoved into hiding in our closets. We will be openly Gay and proud of it. Furthermore, since our oppression is seemingly omnipresent, we define any action which oppresses any single or group of Gay persons because of their Gayness as an action that oppresses all Gay people.

We recognize the TORCH's official editorial stand on Gays', Womens', and Third World Peoples' rights as sympathetic. However, due to the fact that Gay Liberation and the malicious oppression which Gay people suffer is considered humorous and a topic of entertainment by a good portion of the staff, we regard the editorial policy of the TORCH mearly as lip-service and a deceptive attempt to create a false sense of liberalism.

On Feb. 14, four proud Gay people attended a staff meeting of the TORCH. A cartoon which appeared in the TORCH of that date was cited as being overtly prejudiced against Gay people. The cartoonist himself acknowledged that this cartoon was not meant to show the ridiculousness of degenerate stereotypes but rather to use Gay people as an object of humor. We therefore demand:

- A printed and public apology for the cartoon.

This is not a personal attack on the cartoonist but rather to criticize the entire TORCH staff on its lack of consciousness concerning Gay people and Women.

- The TORCH staff issue an apology for the cruel humorous attitude it has shown toward Gay people, especially in the past week.
- The TORCH staff will give an honest effort to raise its consciousness concerning sexism. Without this guarantee no proud Gay person will cooperate with the TORCH staff.

We expect these demands or the commitment of them will be met. This is the final listing of these demands.

RU Gay Mobilization
and concerned people

Laugh at hatred

The purpose of a cartoon is to entertain. We feel the recent TORCH 'Venda' cartoon series has not only entertained but has also provided satirical commentary on current social issues.

Presently, the old Frankenstein master plan to create life from a test tube, is becoming a technological reality. 'Cloning', the pseudo-genetic form of reproduction was the frightening subject satirized by 'Vendawench,' 'Vendadude,' etc. illustrating the future absurd possibilities should Big Business ever obtain the 'cloning' franchise. People's partialities and prejudices could be mass produced, destroying any and all types of individuality and uniqueness.

'Vendacation' (TORCH Feb. 14) attacked the stereotyped way of identifying as many ethnic, racial and social groups that cartoonist Pedro Bell could think of. If your group was exempted, we apologize. There was no attempt to preserve anyone's sensibilities.

These cartoons were attempts to expose the knee-jerk reactions and over-generalizations that still prevail about many social groups: the kind of thinking one associates with Archie Bunker and other minds that won't stretch too far.

TORCH is being bugged by people who are offended by one of the stereotypes satirized in last week's 'Vendacation.' These people charge that depicting stereotypes reinforces the prejudices of our readership.

We hold a conflicting opinion. We sincerely believe that people at RU are all working in one way or another to expand their consciousness and dismiss the prejudice and chauvinism that lingers in all our minds. We hope our cartoons help readers to laugh, laugh loud and hard at the illusions that have been blinding us for too long.

TORCH sexist, racist

To the Editor:

RU Gay Mobilization and other students refuse to allow such blatant, overt displays of sexist, racist, anti-gay policy in our official RU paper. Vendadude and Vendawench cartoons were too much, Vendacation (Feb. 14 TORCH) will not be tolerated.

We demand:

- a printed retraction,
- a discontinuation of the cartoonist's work, and
- an open apology to all offended groups.

Delivered by RU
Gay Mobilization

Good work

To the Editor:

Just read your editorial 'Laugh at hatred' (TORCH, Feb. 21) and under the cartoon it states 'keep those letters to the Editor coming.' Soooo, I thought I would put my two cents in.

Speaking strictly for myself and not in any way in a department sense, I find TORCH very educational and also entertaining. I was greatly impressed by the article on the Health Service written by Andrea Cooper. It was informative and done in good taste.

All I can say is keep up the good work, my best regards to your entire staff.

Eleanor Gibbs

Anti-TORCH leaflet a hoax, Ruzick admits

A leaflet accusing the TORCH staff of 'fascist policies,' widely distributed in RU last week, was an attempt to 'get the TORCH staff talking about the issue of stereotyping,' according to Jim Ruzick, a representative of The Committee to Change Fascist Administration of the TORCH (CC FAT).

Ruzick said the letter which he wrote in reaction to a 'Vend-a-cation' cartoon printed in the Feb. 14 TORCH was the only way he had to attack the TORCH policy of stereotyping ethnic and minority groups in its cartoons.

In the leaflet, Ruzick called a meeting for March 1 to protest the TORCH cartoon policy. Ruzick was the only member of CC FAT in attendance. TORCH staff members, members from the RU Gay Mobe Committee and two other students were also in attendance at the meeting where Ruzick admitted that the leaflet was a hoax, intended only to spark controversy.

George Alexander, a member of RU Gay Mobe, said he came to the meeting to be sure that no one confused the CCFAT leaflet with a leaflet put out at about the same time by the Students Against the Repressive Policy of the TORCH (SARPT) which also claimed TORCH cartoons contributed to the oppression of: Women, Gays, Blacks, Italian-Americans, Polish-Americans, German-Americans and American Indians.

SARPT's leaflet also called a meeting to discuss TORCH's 'repressive policies' on March 1 at 3 PM but the meeting was cancelled by Karyne Pritikin a spokesperson for the group, who announced shortly before the meeting was to be held, 'All the members of our committee have to work. The meeting is called off.'

TORCH editor Carl Andrews said the allegations of the two organizations had been discussed at three staff meetings. At its Feb. 28 meeting, the TORCH staff voted unanimously to issue the following statement: 'TORCH meant no malice in Pedro Bell's cartoon. TORCH has never intentionally been and never will be intentionally used as a vehicle for personal hatred. TORCH will discontinue the 'Vend-a-' series. TORCH will retain Pedro Bell as a cartoonist.'

(Excerpts from 3/6/72 student essay "Groups seek end to all repression by Karyne Pritikin)

ing social injustice.

Members of our group felt both insulted and oppressed by Pedro Bell's caricatures (which seem less like caricatures than true indications of Bell's bigoted sentiments toward gays and his misdirected emotional opinions of women) and when we attempted to present legitimate complaints to the TORCH staff we were humored, ridiculed, referred to in a TORCH editorial as 'people who were bugging the TORCH office' and by Bell as a group of 'malformed social deviants.'

In refraining from printing discriminatory cartoons and satires, the TORCH staff will recognize that what may appear to be humorous on the surface may become an instrument of oppression in the hands of a system that has been using malicious stereotypes as a means of oppression for hundreds of years.

Power to the People!

thought about. * * *

Our readers write: (thus)

To the Editor:

The RU Gay Mobilization stated in the March 6 issue of TORCH that I have personally aided in perpetrating 'institutionalized sexism, racism and anti-minority attitudes' through the now-defunct 'Vend-a' cartoons. When I deliberately showed the absurdity of this country's main ills, suddenly I was accused of creating and/or contributing to the problem. I was also disgusted to realize that this offended group has done nothing in the past to use TORCH as a medium for publicizing its 'plight,' even though pro-gay articles were published in TORCH.

Overlooking its general apathy, I will explain the folly of that group's reactionary comments.

For instance, in the disputed 'Vendacation' cartoons, literally EVERY major ethnic group in Amerika was depicted in satirized caricatures. Therefore, the implication that the cartoons were 'anti-minority' oriented is completely false! Perhaps the cartoons could be described as 'anti-ethnic'.

Thusly, the specific ethnic categories of the cartoons have only underlined the obvious: Amerika is composed of minorities, still refusing to assimilate into one. This selfish social snobbery became even more apparent when individuals limited their ravings to protesting the cartoons pertaining to their own socio-ethnic heritage...instead of making legitimate efforts to make this country the so-called 'melting pot of the world,' those people contrive to remain in their own ethnic, elitist fantasies.

The disputed cartoons were allegedly declared 'racist' in nature...a rather preposterous assertion about an article that satirized all three racial groups! Evidently, some people still enjoy the use of reactionary cliches for special effects.

I have also been accused of being 'overtly prejudiced against gay people,' both in my cartoons and in private life. Since out of a total of 16 individual stereotypes portrayed in the two 'Vendacation' articles, only ONE was specifically directed against homosexual stereotypes, it seems unlikely that a rational person would conclude that I am an anti-gay bigot. That minority group merely received 'equal exposure' and was certainly not singled out in the context of the entire cartoons.

I did not approve of Gay Mobe's elitist attitude of their predicament in this country as being far too serious to be 'joked about.' African peoples in the Western world have been exploited and oppressed to an infinitely greater degree than homosexuals, yet exactly ZERO blacks have expressed negative reactions to the black stereotypes that appeared in the same cartoons.

That leads to the main idea of my cartoon series; to raise the consciousness of people who still believe in stereotypes which supposedly is the same purpose of Gay Mobe. Apparently, the group objected to my presentation.

As to the statements of intentionally 'promoting sexism,' I will say that in no way, did I promote any ideas that didn't already exist! The typical Playboy bunny and fashion model are two living examples of robotized sex machines. Let Gay Mobe concentrate all of their energy on the problems of today, and if they're successful, the medical discovery of genetic cloning will not be utilized in the hypothetical sexist manner suggested by 'Vendawench' and 'Vendadude.' The scientific process of cloning will serve the peoples of tomorrow only if their moral consciousness permits it.

In conclusion, my personal comments to members of Gay Mobe were my own, and should not have been used as a suggestion that my sentiments expressed was in line with the official TORCH policy.

To prevent other future misdirected outbursts, please refrain from holding the TORCH staff responsible for the content of my cartoons. I am responsible for producing my own work and have no one, technically speaking, to censure my work, except the editor.

As far as apologies go, I see no reason to present one, as there have been no legitimate complaints expressed by groups or individuals. Of course, if some desire some sort of verbal compensation, this will be granted... provided that the reasons are worthy!

Pedro Bell
Cartoonist Incredibles

EACH cell in the human body, regardless of function, contains all of the genetic information necessary to duplicate a complete copy of that person! In addition, individual organs can be pin-pointed and reproduced. This process called CLONING may pave the way for the eventual possibility of 'customized bodies and organs to order'.

As soon as storage and growth techniques are perfected, expect to see in the near future, a complete line of 'cloned' products by vending manufacturers. Following, is another hypothetical addition in this series of commercial products.

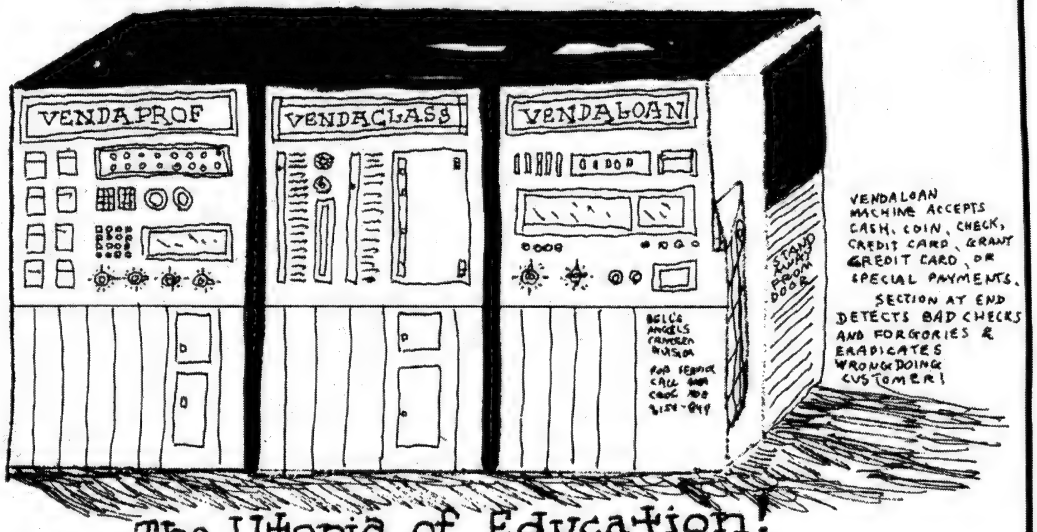
After another semester of academic ass-kicking, RU's honorary student chairman of perpetual probation, the Black G.A.S. came to the conclusion that the ENTIRE academic system is at fault! Obviously, this denizen of stupendous intellectual aptitude cannot be responsible for the traumatic situation that plagues him and the lesser mortals of the alledged teaching institutions of this wicked planet. Therefore, the Black G.A.S. has found it necessary to develop the ultimate solution:

"VENDACATION"

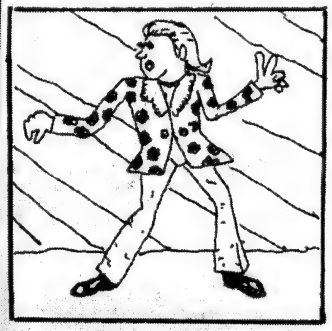
This combination of fully-completed 'cloned' professors equipped with a variety of assorted 'course educator' units makes it possible for the students to provide themselves with totally relevant and specialized educations needed for today's society! Furthermore, the automated process eliminates all of those expensive and inefficient irritants of high tuition costs: mean instructors, jive courses, vampire cahsiers, egotistical department heads, and of course .. the dean!

Any resemblance to actual persons, living, dead or otherwise...is mere happenstance. Any resemblance to past, present and future college courses...is mere happenstance. Any resemblance to decency, righteousness, and morality.. is mere happenstance.

VENDACATION

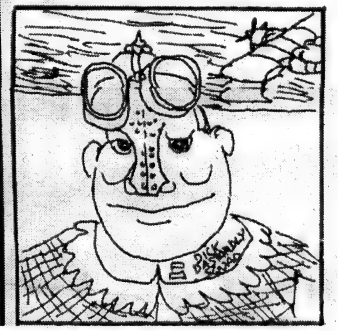


The Utopia of Education!



Denny Ladora Paris

COURSE		CLASS
Soc	136	Gay Liberation
Art	210	Interior Decorating
Art	211	Fashion Design
Bio	210	Intro. to Botany
BGS	399	Nursing Internship
Pol Sci	302	Paris Fashion Politics
Psy	213	Freudian Concepts on Homosexuality
His	252	Women's Liberation
Bio	211	Anal Orgasms (Non-credit)



OSCAR BOOMBAMSKI

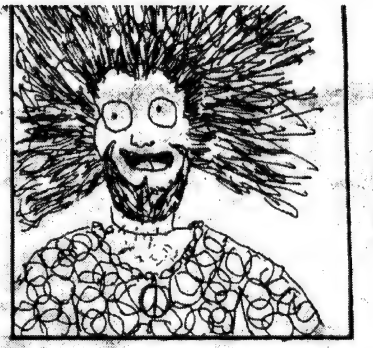
His	001	(Non-credit) Polish Heroes in America
His	002	(Non-credit) Polish Heroes elsewhere
Bio	384	Microbial Polish Sausage Enzymes
Basic Writing Practice	101	Polish Advertising
Engng Sci	177	Blacksmithing
Psy	309	Effects of Polish Jokes on the Subconcious

LORENZO 'TRIGGER' MANCINI

COURSE		CLASS
Psy	314	Behavorial Patterns of Bouncers
Art	200	Crafts: Cement & Concrete Making
Bio	113	Pizza Ultrastructure
		Cowards, Stool Pigeons & Other Invertebrates
Phy Geo	177	Cicero, Illinois
Bus Adm	140	Problems in Body Decomposition
Bus	150	Bondsman Accounting
Bus	151	Intro. to Blackmail
Bus	153	Intro. to Extortion
Bus	154	Governmental Regulation of Crime
Bus	155	Criminal Regulation of Government
Bus	156	Business Seminar with the Godfather
Foreign Trade	108	Heroin Exportation & Importation
French	200	Intro. to the Kiss of Death
Chem	315	Poisoning Methodology

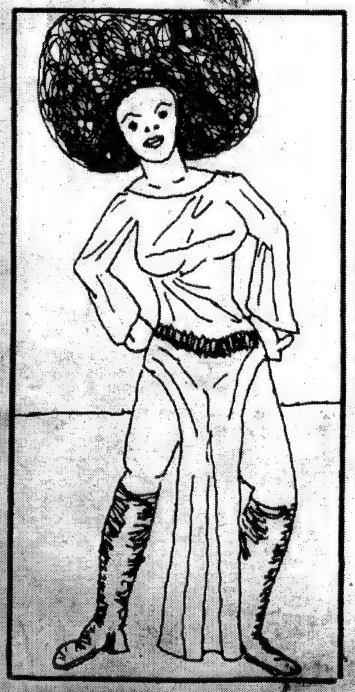
BON PETER VON HIMMLER

Physics 300	Nuclear Physics in Nazi Germany
Engng Sci 360	Nazi Rocket Technology
Bio 300	Advanced Studies in Racial Superiority
His 300	Nazi War Conquests
Art 300	Concentration Camp Architecture
Pol Sci 300	Political Alternatives in Nazism
Pol Sci 301	Seminar on the Third Reich
Bus Adm 300	Ex-Nazis in American Industries
Engng Sci 361	Police Riot Control
Engng Sci 362	Law and Order in America
Engng Sci 418	Automatic Weapons Technology
Eng 330	Master Race Literature



FLASHMAN

Phil 115	Basic Tripping
Art 201	Light Show Graphics
Engng Sci. 213	Revolutionary Trashings
Art 300	Crafts: Hash Pipe Workshop
Music 406	Wah-Wah Pedal Harmonics
Psy 313	Groupie Morality
Adv 203	Underground Comix Layout & Design
Bio 260	Frank Zappa's Burnt Wienie Sandwich
Bio 269	Oral Sex



TANYA T. WILLIAMS

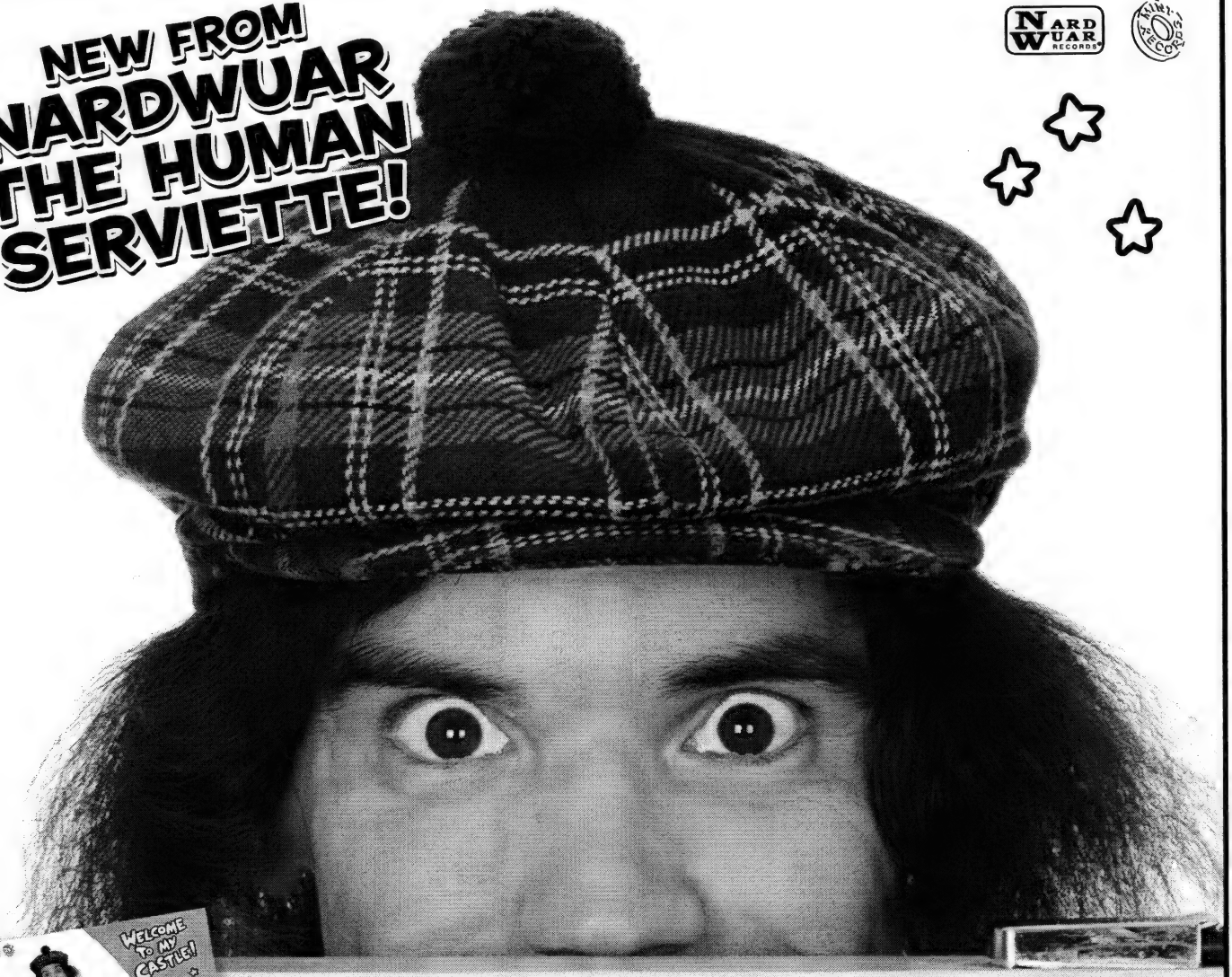
Bio 143	Biological Analysis of Natural Rhythm
Phy Geo 237	Regional Nightclub Locations
Bio 117	Identification & Structural Analysis of Watermelon
Physics 264	Composition of Nuclear Funk
Speech 101	Urban Ghetto Slang
Econ 122	Intro. to Welfare
Engng Sci 237	Material Strength of Hotpants
Phil 278	Bitching
Bio 421	Cornbread Bioenergetics
Anthro 213	Seminar in Gossip

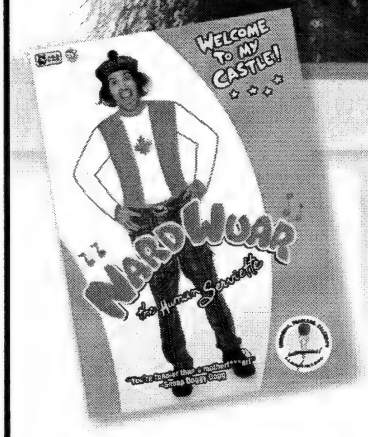
JACK WILSON
ALIAS THE 'BOSS BERSERKER'

Psy 500	Physiological Effects of Squashing
Bio 478	Hernia Technology
Psy 550	Sexual Problems of Super Humans
Ed 440	Flying Manuevers
Art 510	Fabrics: Costume Design
Engng 620	Weapon Design
Speech 428	Snappy Cliches
Eng 438	Ancient Heroes in Literature

Continued - - - Next Issue!

NEW FROM NARDWUAR THE HUMAN SERVIETTE!





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A "prequel" to Nardwuar's Doot Doola Doot Doo... Doot Doo! DVD — an interview only (no music) compilation featuring 2 of Nardwuar's public access TV specials from the '90s, plus a bonus DVD of stimulating interview material.

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Nardwuar

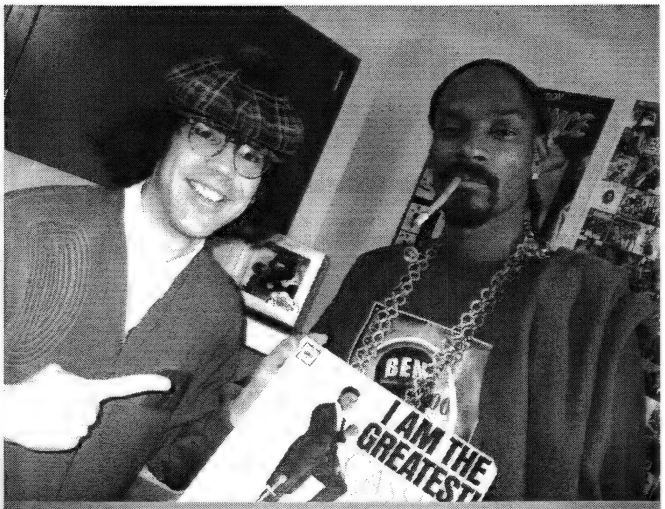
the Human Serviette

versus

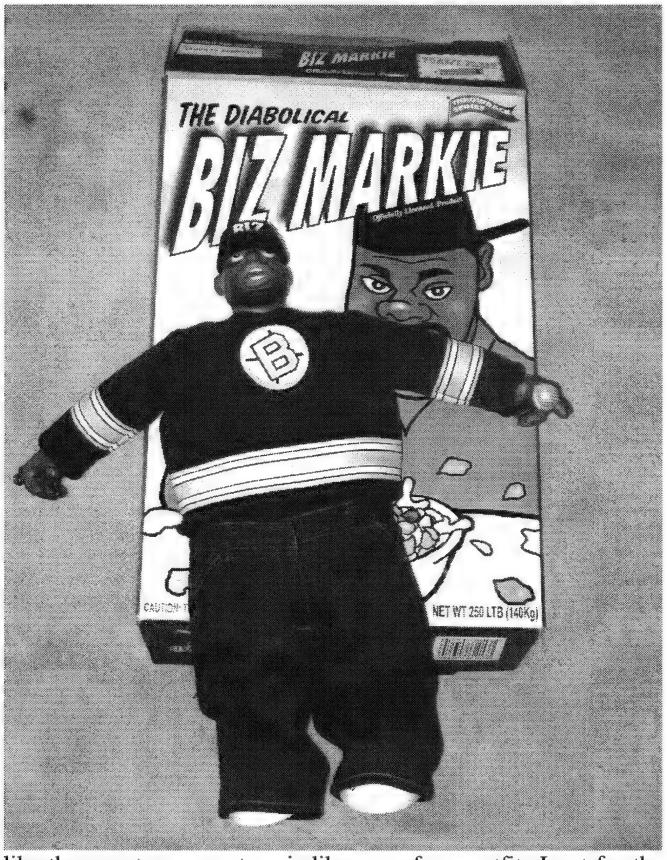
Snoop

Doggy Dogg 2007!

Who are you?
Snoop Dogg: Snoop Dogg, the greatest rapper of all time. East side, LBC. LBC's savior. I'm the best thing that rap got going.
Snoop Doggy Dogg, is it true that you lectured at Oxford? Did you lecture at Oxford University?
I did lecture at Oxford University along with Harvard, Yale and Princeton just to name a few. You know I got bitches everywhere.
Snoop Doggy Dogg, I think it's amazing, you always take it to another level. The Snoop hot dog. How can anybody top the Snoop hot dog? What can you tell me about the Snoop hot dog?
It's a beautiful thing, ya know. Everybody loves to eat hot dogs, so why not eat a foot long hot dog with Snoop Dogg don't you understand me? No balls included. *[laughs]*
What does it taste like, Snoop Dogg? What do your wieners taste like?
Uh *[laughs]*. They taste good actually. They taste like the best hot dogs you ever had with seasoning salt on the inside of them. For real they got seasoning salt in the hot dogs. *[laughs]*
Where can you get them, Snoop? Where can you get the Snoop hot dog?
They gonna be at local venues, at grocery stores. I'm opening up a Snoopamarket, a chain of Snoopamarkets where they're gonna be selling them at, as well as the sporting arenas where they play basketball, football and baseball.
Snoop, I think it's great, the hot dog, and I think you are a person you can ask about advice and stuff. What do you think about this doll right here*? [Nardwuar hands Snoop a Biz Markie doll]* **The Biz Markie doll. Tell me what you think about the Biz Markie doll.**
This is the Biz?
This is the Biz.
[Snoop drops the doll by mistake] Oops, sorry 'bout that Biz you big ass fucker. This here is my homeboy.



What do you think of the Biz? What can you tell me of the importance of the Biz, Snoop? And the Biz doll? What do you think of this from a marketing perspective?
[Snoop imitates Biz Markie's voice] He's die-a-bowl-acle.
He's like the amazing beat boxer isn't he? In a cereal box! What do you think?
This is dope. This is dope. I like this. What are they selling this at?
Probably about $200, Snoop Dogg.
How long ago did you get it?
It's been on the market about two years or so.
Oh, it just came out?
Two years actually. And the Biz has been taking it to another level... check it out 'cause you're the wizard of marketing, the Biz clock. [Nardwuar hands Snoop a Biz Markie Clock] He's got his own clock. Is that something that's ever gone through your mind, a clock?
[laughs]
A Snooper clock?
Naw, I didn't think about getting no clock. I'm just trippin' on Biz's expression he's something else. *[laughs]* "I can't believes it. I can't believes I'm sellin' a clock!"
Snoop Dogg, what's Snoop dog food like? What's the dog food like that you have? 'Cause you have Snoop dog food don't you? Doggy biscuits?
Yeah, some doggy biscuits, dog pet line products. I even got clothes for your dogs, kinda like some of the outfits you wearin',



like the sweater you got on is like one of my outfits I got for the dogs.

Ba-boom!

[laughs]

You love the dogs don't you Snoop Dogg? Like, you really do love the dogs.

Yeah, I really do. I'm a dog lover. That's just my nature, you know what I'm saying. George Clinton called me the futuristic bow wow.

'Cause I wanted to ask you what you think about when you read off stuff like this, like check this out. *[Nardwuar hands a paper to Snoop]* This was in my local paper, the North Shore News. And check out this headline that we have right here in the North Shore News, and it says "Snoop Dogg Faces Execution Following West Van Attacks."

[reading] "'Snoop Doggy Dog is just bad to the bone,' said neighbours who were bitten and chased by him near West Vancouver British properties over a nine month period...' Oh, this must be a dog named Snoop Doggy Dogg, not me. *[laughs]* ***[laughing]*** **Yes it is. *[Nardwuar reads from the paper]* " A Rottweiler cross named Snoop has been put on doggie death row this week.**

Wow.

So how do you feel when dogs get put on doggie death row there, Snoop Dogg? Like, fellow dogs and stuff like that? You love the dogs.

Yeah I wouldn't do it. I wish I had knew about this. I would've gone over there and broke him out. I woulda broke him out. If I'd been there he would've been alive. I would've had to kill or something. Sorry about that Snoop Dogg, you went out like a gangster though.

Snoop dog faces execution following West Van attacks

Jane Seyd

jseyd@nsnews.com

A rottweiler-cross named Snoop has been put on doggie death row this week after putting his British Properties neighbours through a canine reign of terror.

Snoop doggie dog is just bad to the bone, said neighbours who were bitten and chased by him near his West Vancouver British Properties home over a nine-month stint.

Capital offences committed by Snoop dog including chomping into one woman's leg while she was visiting a neighbour and forcing her to the ground, biting another neighbour's hand and forcing others, including children and neighbourhood pets, to run for cover to escape Snoop's wrath.

"Whenever he was out, we got calls," said Chris Cottrill, a bylaw officer

See Dog page 4

A West Van gangsta-G.

Sure did.

Snoop, what do you remember about being in Korn's video "Twisted Transistor?"

Um, just being the rock 'n' roll star that I am, having fun, actin' a fool.

And who else was in the video, and what was it all about?

David Banner was in the video. Lil' Jon was in the video. And um, Xzibit. We actually played Korn, they got some rappers to play them.

And in the video there's a guy wearing a tartan hat and asking you some questions, and he gets slapped. Do you remember doing that at all?

He imitated you.

That's what I was wondering, is that an allusion to me?

It is. It was you. We thought about you, Korn, and myself and my manager. Umm-

Ted?

Naw, um, his name is Dick. You don't know my manager? Dick, last name Inyomouth?

Ba-boom!

Dick In-Your-Mouth. Yeah, my manager Dick In-Your-Mouth told me to tell you that. [laughs]

Snoop Doggy Dogg, I just think it's amazing, thank you for giving me the props there! I would like to ask you, why do you like to steal my stuff Snoop Dogg? Remember you first tried to steal my Redd Foxx doll? Do you remember that?

I stole the Blowfly album from you. You wouldn't let me take the Redd Foxx doll, but I see some shit I'm taking today. I'm taking that [points to poster on wall]... I'm taking this[points to record]...I'm taking that...

I'm not sure, Snoop Dogg. You took the Blowfly album, that was quite intense of you. And actually, I talked to Blowfly and he has a message for you for taking my Blowfly album.

I talked to him too! [laughs]

And what is Blowfly's message to Snoop Dogg, do you think? Here is Blowfly's message to Snoop Dogg for taking my record, and here we go:

[Nardwuar plays a video-taped message from Blowfly]

Blowfly recorded message: Snoop, you remember you stole that fuckin' record, dog? You are a fuckin' dysentarian bone-buryin', tick-catchin', flea-scratchin', Lachey-racin', hoe-chasin', no-

growlin', whole moon-rollin', no-listen bark 'n' pissin', bone-hawkin', collar-carryin', howling cat-beatin', afro-eatin' poor excuse for major mutt. Your breath smell like your butt. I'm outta the cut. In exactly 13 days from now, Snoop, you gon' look down and find beautiful pussy where your lil' dick used to be. [evil laugh that ends with a throaty "augh, augh augh augh"] I'm gone ! [Blowfly gives the finger]

[Laughs] Blowfly! That nigga said "augh, augh augh augh."

Blowfly to the rescue. Blowfly's sticking up for me, Snoop Doggy Dogg.

That's some OG shit right there 'cause Blowfly's a real muthafucker, you know what I'm talkin' 'bout? And this is the real McCoy [begins to sing]... "Come on and join Blowfly's convoy..."

So are you ever going to sing with Blowfly on stage? He wants you to sing with him on stage, to "Convoy."

Snoop Dogg: I wanna get down with Blowfly. Blowfly, I wanna get in the studio with you, make some music with you, and do it big, you're one of the artists I'm lookin' forward to working with, too. I always wanted to get down with you.

And remember also, you mess with Nardwuar The Human Serviette and Blowfly will come after you Snoop. What's gonna happen in 13 days, eh?

I'ma leave you alone 'cause I don't that to happen man. I don't want Uncle Blowfly to put that curse on me.

Snoop Doggy Dogg, winding up here lastly, what can you tell about the importance of R&B and stuff? ***[Nardwuar hands Snoop a Record]*** **Here we have Lyn Collins with her song "Think (About It)," which I think you sampled way back when.**

Yep, this is a bad record right here. James Brown produced it I believe. Yep.

Like, why do you like R&B and soul? There's so much of it, like, Slave, too. [Nardwuar hands Snoop a Slave Record]

It's the feel of the music. It's like the sound of it, the feel of it. [looking at the Slave record] Oh man.

This is Slave, who you sampled for "Gin And Juice."

Yeah, "watchin' ladies, watchin' you."

Like, these are really important soul/R&B records, you really love it. [Nardwuar hands Snoop a Moments record] You got The Moments?

[sings] "Look at me, I'm in love."

What do you remember about The Moments, Snoop Dogg?

[sings] "Look at me, I'm in love. The preacher said, I'm in love." Oh that's that shit right here. I remember they had the, um, falsetto voice. The lead singer was singing high voiced.

Lastly here Snoop Dogg, how did you get your demo tape to Dr. Dre? You and Warren G. How did you get your tapes to him? How did you get your demo tapes to him in the early days?

Snoop Dogg: [Takes a deep toke] Shit, Warren G got that motherfucker to it. That's his brother so he found a way to get it to him doing uh, a bachelor party. The music got cut off and uh, Warren G. slipped my CD on, well my cassette at the time. He slipped my cassette on and he kept the party rocking.

Snoop Dogg, what can you tell me here about Special Ed. ***[Nardwuar hands Snoop a Special Ed Record]*** **He was a big influence on you, wasn't he? The Special Ed?**

Yeah that's my homeboy right here. We finally got together, made a record together. This is my homeboy. I was definitely inspired by him. 'Cause I liked his style, and they way he was just different from everybody else, and how he just... he never really did it like nobody else. He did his shit they way he's supposed to do it, and I liked that, that showed me how to be me.

Snoop Dogg, I was wondering, what does this mean? [Nardwuar pulls out a hat] You addressed this Soul Plane hat to me, and it says "C.M.F." What does "C.M.F." mean, Snoop Dogg?

Snoop Dogg: Cock-sucking motherfucker.

Should I take that as a compliment?

Definitely, you suck cock good, here. [laughs]

Well thank you very much, Snoop Doggy Dogg. Anything else you want to say to the people out there?

I'm the greatest of all time next to Cassius Clay and James Brown. Then there's Snoop Dogg.

What about Kurtis Blow?

Kurtis Blow good. But like I said, Cassius Clay and James Brown, then Snoop Dogg.

Cassius Clay, you mean, the greatest, Cassius Clay? ***[Nardwuar hands Snoop a Cassius Clay Record]***

That's what I just told you didn't I? He's the greatest of all time. [looking at Cassius Clay record] Is this him talking?

Yes it is, and doing some rappin' as well. This is Muhammad Ali. Have you ever met him at all?

Yes, this is the champ. I need this record for the beats that I'm making right now.

I don't think you can take this Snoop Dogg.

No, I'm just gonna borrow it. [laughs]

I don't... what is the difference between "taking" and "borrowing," Snoop? We've been through this.

Snoop Dogg: Borrowing mean I'm gonna give it back to you. Taking mean you ain't getting shit back. [laughs]

Why do you always take my stuff, Snoop Doggy Dogg?

Because, let me tell you what I'm gonna do with this. I'm gonna go to my DJ, let him sample it, put it into the turntable to the computer and I'ma give it back to you because I know this means a lot to you. I'm not gonna be like I used to be when I used to be taking your shit. I'm gonna borrow it now. It's gonna be both of our shit. OK? I'm just gonna keep it at my house and whenever you need it you can get it.

Really? I can come to your house, Snoop Doggy Dogg?

The next interview we do is gonna be at my house.

Well that's awesome! Thank you so much Snoop Doggy Dogg. And you can have the poster as well. I'm throwing in the poster.

Thank you pimpin'. I like your style. I'm gonna be real harmonic towards you because Blowfly's on your side, and it ain't easy to get Blowfly to ride with you man. That's some gangster shit.

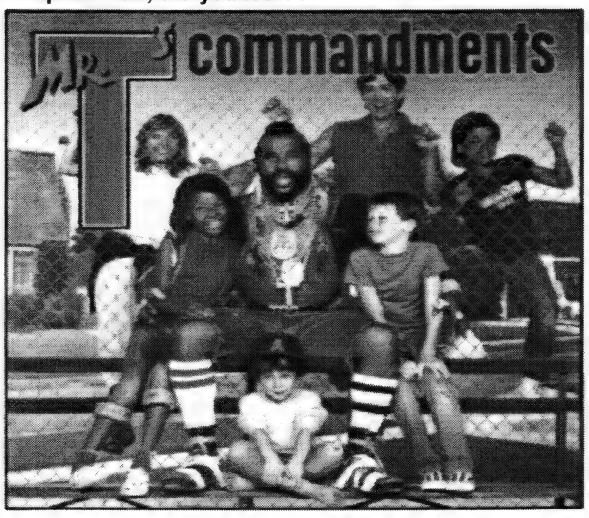
Well, thanks so much Snoop Doggy Dogg. Keep on rockin' in the free world and doot doola doot doo...

Doot doo. [blows smoke in to the mike] Smoke one. Snoop Dogg, yo.

To hear this interview (and 3 other interviews with Snoop!) hop to http://www.nardwuar.com

Nardwuar
the Human Serviette
vs.
Ice-T

Nardwuar: Who are you?
Ice-T: Ice-T.
Ice-T, I have to ask you, right off the bat, did you ghostwrite this *[Nardwuar gives Ice T a cassette]* **right here, "Mr. T's Commandments?"**
Yes I did.
That's amazing. Can you tell me about working with Mr. T, because you're not credited on this particular record?
I'm not on there?
No. It doesn't have your name. Like if you open it up, look for your name, it doesn't say your actual name. It doesn't say Ice-T on the actual credits when you open it up.
Yeah, this is a secret. I guess back in the day I didn't feel I was ever gonna be anybody. I was around these cats who were actually doing a video for him called "Be Somebody Or Be Somebody's Fool" and they didn't really have a rapper and they asked me if I'd try to help Mr. T rap and I wrote mostly all the raps for him.
I love it. "Mr. T's Commandments," believe it, every word is...
True.
True, yeah.
[laughs] It was pretty wack. I mean, it's something to look back on, but the fact that I was able to even work with Mr. T? I gotta, you know, give myself a pat on the back for that.
Because it makes me think, who is the real Mr. T? Mr. T or Ice-T? Who is the real T?
Mr. T has the mohawk.
And that gives him the crown?
That's the answer, yeah. And he's bigger than me and he's more violent, I think.
Ice-T, I wanted to read you a quote from Blowfly. Blowfly says, "I'm a stand-up comedian, a rapper and a singer." What do you think about that? Are you like Blowfly?
Yeah, yeah, I try to sing, you know I sing in Body Count. But yeah I'm a stand-up comedian. I like to try and get a joke in edgewise, you know what I'm sayin'? Then I'm a rapper. I go from one side to the other. Sometimes I'm dead serious about certain issues and other times I'm just, you know, having fun.
Ice-T, is it true, David Hasselhoff, Ice-T? Is this true, you're going to be producing David Hasselhoff's rap LP?
No, there's a rumor out about that. What happened was I was doing an interview with a guy and he asks me, he says, "You're so cool Ice, you could probably make anybody rap."And I'm like, "For enough money I could make anybody rap." He said, "Could you make David Hasselhoff rap?" I said, "For $5 million I could have him rappin' like Jay-Z."So the next thing you know we got the rumor out that I'm working with David Hasselhoff. But uh, nope.
I heard he's your next door neighbor.
Nope. Nah, I never even met him before.
So nothing ever came of it then? He didn't ever contact you?
The offer's still out there.
So David Hasselhoff, if you're listening to this...
Or anybody — $5 million, become a hip-hop star.
Ice-T, how are the juice wars going? How are the juice wars going, because you have the Liquid...
Yeah, I had Liquid Ice, but I got in a lawsuit with them cats and I'm not promoting them anymore.
Ah, OK, 'cause it was Liquid Ice and Nelly has the Pimp Juice, so I thought there was some juice wars going on.
I made Liquid Ice. Liquid Ice was better. It tasted better and everything, but what happened was the cats that had the company sold it to some other people and they tried to breach my contract and we had to take 'em to the max, you dig what I'm saying? We had to get our money.
Ice-T, you talked today about how you had to prepare for potential predators, battling potential predators.
Yeah.
Like, you never know who you'll come up against. So I offer you this: What was it like when you battled a leprechaun, in *Leprechaun In The Hood*?
I was worried about that leprechaun, because that leprechaun, I never saw that guy out of makeup. So he is a midget, so I would hit the corner, he was walking around, and he always looked like that so I wasn't really cool with that leprechaun. He was a strange character and he was always in character, so I just, you know, so I just read my lines and you know, stayed out of the way.
That's somebody you never prepared for, you never prepared for a leprechaun, did you Ice-T?



Nah. I ain't never thought I'd have to go head up with somebody with superpowers.

Ice-T, what was it like having a 1-900 line? You had a 1-900 line. That's pretty cool.

Yeah, that's cool. Back in the day, before the internet you know what I'm saying, so people would call. You just answer a whole bunch of questions and they'd press a button and you'd get a recording.

Ice-T, November 14. What does November 14 mean to you?

Day before November 15?

No, it's Ice-T day in Atlanta!

Yeah. [laughs] I got that years and years ago. I never went down there and flexed my key to the city. I haven't gone down there and said, "Hey, everybody shut up. It's my day." But they gave that to me years ago.

Is that the only day you have? Have you been given the keys to other cities?

I think they wish they took that day back. I think after they gave that to me people said, "Do you really know who he is?" So you know, I would make it so November 14, in Atlanta, all titties will be bare.

Ice-T, were you the first guy to say "ho" on a record?

I dunno, maybe, me or Too $hort, probably.

I want to ask you about some of these Ice-T album jackets here. *[Nardwuar pulls out some vintage Ice T vinyl]* **We have the "Coldest Rap." First off, let's zero in on that photo of you. What is going on there Ice-T?**

Well, that's the old hip-hop style, you know what I'm saying? A lot of metal, a lot of studs and stuff. If you looked at Melle Mel And The Furious Five, and all of us was wearing. It was real heavy metal so that was the style back then.

Were you told to wear that?

Nah. That was how MCs, we wanted to look tough, so that's what we wore.

And there's the "Coldest Rap," that's where I thought the rap that contained the word "ho" for the first time was on wax.

Yeah, this is my first record. This is not actually on the right label. It's on a record label called Saturn, but you know I still have my hat on and my glasses and stuff. You know, back in the day that was the cool look.

Now, they dressed you up for the movie *Breakin'*? Did they dress you up?

Nah. That was just my clothes.

So those were your clothes?

Yeah, I had on, like, a bomber jacket and a hat from Neiman Marcus and uh, just doing my thing.

Ice-T, underneath that record, if you could just lift them, we have another compilation called *The Compton Compilation*. And if you could turn that over for a second, I wanted to ask you about this. Here we have a picture of Compton's Most Wanted with a white guy in the band!

Yeah, well you know, there's white people in Compton. Actually, that was MC Eiht and their crew, you know what I'm saying? I mean it was like, who was in the original NWA? Arabian Prince was in that group back in the day, you know what I'm saying? So there's white people in Compton, you know that?

And right over here we have Vanilla C, a female rapper. What's the history of female gangsta rappers, Ice-T?

I dunno. The trip with gangsta rappers is once a girl acts too hard it's like she no longer acts like a girl, so it's kinda like a paradox, you know what I'm saying? They can only rap so hard then they start sounding man-ish, so it never really works. I think the only real people that really mastered that are Foxy Brown and say, Lil' Kim.

What do you think, if we could move his record out, of this record? This person right here?

Terry C, right?

Terry C. What's the importance of Terry C, a white woman gangsta rapper?

Yeah, somehow Eazy hooked up with her and she was like supposed to be the next thing and stuff but I never really met her. From what I understood she was an interesting chick, had an ill personality. A lot of people weren't really getting along with her, but then I heard she turned over and started to try and do rock.

I've been mentioning the women because you're hosting VH1 Hip-Hip Honors and I understand you're inducting MC Lyte into the hall of fame. MC Lyte!

Yeah, MC Lyte is a hardcore rapper.

East Coast.

Yeah, East Coast, I wouldn't call her gangsta rap, but she was hardcore. You know, she was right on the edge and very much respected and one of the pioneers of the early, rugged style of rap.

Ice-T, we have *[Nardwuar pull out another vinyl LP]* **here The Posse, *Chapter Two*, another Compton record.**

Uh-huh.

On the back here I find it neat there are some pictures here of the 2 Live Crew when they were from L.A.

Yeah, people don't know that. Actually brother Marquis used to be my hypeman. He used to come out on stage with us at some of our shows and all the groups from L.A. originally started on Macola Records see. Macola was a pressing plant in L.A. that we could go to and you could go in there with a tape and they would make you a record. So that's what me, NWA, all the L.A. groups started right there.

And right there *[pointing to the record]* **we have the Digital Underground. Now at this time was 2Pac dancing for Digital Underground? What can you say about 2Pac dancing for Digital Underground?**

Yeah, 2Pac was dancing and doing the whole Digital thing. You know, "Doowutchyalike" like and all that kinda stuff, having a good time, you know. He didn't really jump off until he went into his solo career with the more hardcore stuff.

And here we have Ice-T*![Nardwuar pulls out a another Ice T LP]*

What do you remember about this? This is one cool record cover, Ice-T.

[Looking at record] It's me and Evil, you know what I'm saying? And uh, you know, everybody's just trying to, we had the gun. I had the .38, you know. Back in the day I had the three fingered ring right there that everybody wanted. Some fresh Jordans, you know what I'm saying? It was just being funky fresh, just keeping it real clean.

Do you still have that outfit?

Nah. I don't have that outfit. But it would still look good today.

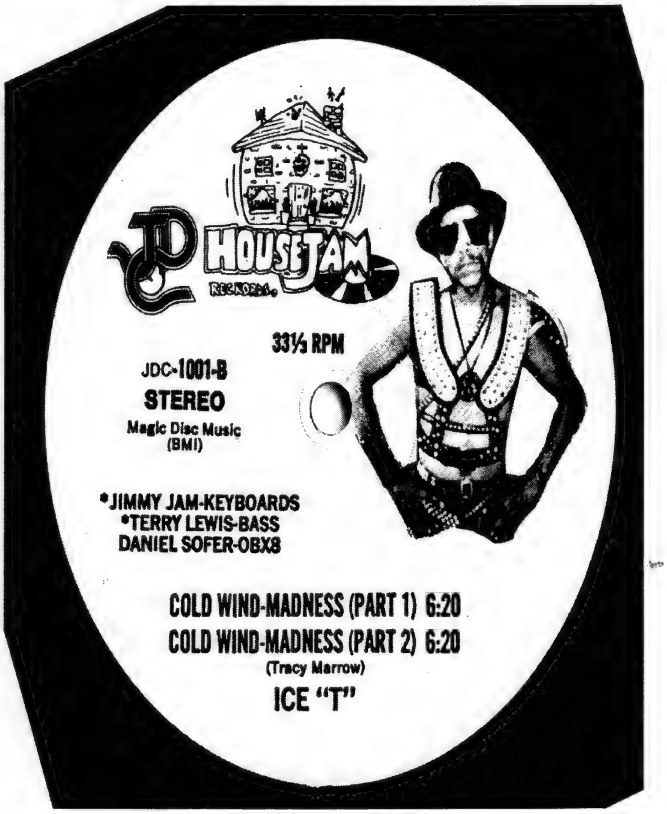
Ice-T, one other thing I was wondering about was "99 Problems." What's the history of that song? It's your song. Jay-Z took it, and now apparently there's some links to 2 Live Crew?

What happened was, the true story is Brother Marquis made that comment one time I was with him. And he was like you know "I got 99 problems and a bitch ain't one." So I thought we can make a record off of that, so I call Marquis and flew him out to L.A. Me and him did the record together, paid him and everything was cool and that was that. Years later, Jay-Z hears the record from Rick Rubin and decides he wants to remake it, remakes the hook and does it. Then Marquis comes back and hears Jay-Z did it and decides he wants more money, but all the money was already paid out. I didn't get any more money or any publishing from it because I had a publishing deal at the time. So he decides he wants to sue me and all kinds of nasty stuff which friends shouldn't do to each other, but that's the true story. Nothing's happened since then. You know, it's kinda water under the bridge, you know, but the first "99 Problems" was done by myself and Brother Marquis from 2 Live Crew.

Ice-T, what did you do on *Fame*? You were on *Fame*. What did you do on *Fame*?

Breakdancer, I was a breakdancer.

Would you get paid for that? Did you negotiate a good deal or was it like those other movies where you didn't get as much money?
Nah, we got paid scale, you know, so probably, like, seven grand.
Ice-T, you're a good friend of Jello Biafra. How come Jello Biafra, ex-Dead Kennedy is the real G? How is Jello Biafra the real G?
Well, you know, real G's basically, if you want to get into it, it just means you're original. You know, and Jello Biafra is one of the original Dead Kennedys members, one of the original punkers, one of the original people who really set the mode for early punk rock and stuff like that, so that makes him a G. If you're obviously a copy of somebody, you don't get that G. You can't be called a G, you basically a replica.
Ice-T, do you still like Sizzler?
Yeah, Sizzler's more of a West Coast place, you know. In New York right now we go to Tad's.
Ice-T, the movie *3,000 Miles To Graceland.*
Yeah.
I was a bit upset at the end of that movie. You're suspended from a flying fox and you totally get murdered. Why did you agree to do that? Was that just for the money? Because I felt mad. Ice-T, you had no chance to live in that movie did you?
Uh, well the true story was the cat that was directing that wanted me to be one of the Elvis' at the beginning of the movie. And I couldn't do it because I had another obligation. And they actually wrote that part in the movie to bring me in at the end, so it was kinda like the director wanted me to be, like I got a cool part playing Hamilton and it was a pretty exciting moment in the movie. So I get a lot of clips in action sequence shows.
So you're just hanging basically from a meat hook getting nailed.
Just spinning around shooting two guns. It was cool. It was fun.
Ice-T, Dan Quayle, did he get a gold record for helping Body Count?
Yeah, we gave Dan Quayle a gold record. We gave Charlton Heston a gold record. Not so much they helped us, but it was just like they was so stupid so, you know, you can call, once you have an official gold record you can call and get anybody's name connected to it. So we got one with Charlton Heston's name on it and one with Quayle. We haven't ever presented it to 'em.
Ice-T, you recently played the Leeds Festival with Body Count, didn't you?
Yes sir
And you were heard saying, "The main stage is full of pussies."
True.
What is a pussy, Ice-T?
Just a pussy. Everybody knows what a pussy is. Just... I guess a pussy is something that has no balls.
Ice-T, what's wrong with teddy bears? Why don't you like teddy bears? You're saying Kanye West has a teddy bear. Why don't you like teddy bears?
I don't understand grown men with teddy bears. I don't understand it. I mean, Kanye West is cool, I mean he just threw me with the teddy bear.
Ice-T, I wanted to ask you lastly here, about this record right here *[Nardwuar pulls out an LP],* **we have the Jimmy Castor Bunch. What can you tell the people about the Jimmy Castor Bunch? You used a sample of this on your *Power* record.**
Uh, you know, Afrika Islam produced a lot of my music and he was into the old original hardcore funk bands like Jimmy Castor Bunch and Dazz Band and all the real heavy grooves like that. So that's part of hip-hop is taking something that may be, you know, obscure to other people and making it funky. That's what hip-hop is about.
And you were saying Ice-T, that your band has splintered. Is it true that your ex-associate the Egyptian Lover is a pimp or is it DJ Aladdin who is a pimp?
DJ Aladdin's a pimp [laughs]. DJ Aladdin is now pimpin' somewhere. He may be up here in Canada with his groove on. Egyptian Lover, from what I last understood, is out DJing all over the world.
Because he was in the movie *Breakin'* with you right?
Uh, he was in there with Afrika Islam and The Glove.
Ice-T, anything else you want to add to the people out there?
Nah, I think you got enough. You're a very interesting guy and I like your wardrobe.
Well, thank you very much Ice-T, I appreciate that.
Yeah it's real pimpish. I like how it's going down. It's real big.
Ice-T, why should people care about Ice-T and Body Count?
I dunno. I mean you gotta care about something, why not care about us? You know what I'm saying? I think music is just like going to the ice cream store, man. You know, if you don't like this flavor pick out another flavor. I just happen to be one of the flavors in the ice cream store.
Well, thanks so much Ice-T, keep on rockin' in the free world and doot doola doot doo...
Bang bang.



To hear an audio version of this interview visit
http://www.nardwuar.com

TERRY STAFFORD:
Suspicion, Big In Vegas, Amarillo By Morning
by Harry Young

His singing voice is magic - and often compared to Elvis. As a songwriter, his mystic powers of observation captured the places he loved and the people he knew. Terry Stafford was an American original of the highest quality.

His mesmerizing *Suspicion* spent 7 Weeks in Billboard's Top 10 at the very height of Beatlemania. *Big In Vegas*, the smash he wrote with Buck Owens, spawned a universal catch phrase and continual Sin City advertising campaign. In 2003 his *Amarillo By Morning* clicked at #12 on Country Music Television's 100 Greatest Songs Of Country Music and #7 in the USA TODAY/ DCI Music On Location Poll.

Tragically, Terry Stafford passed away from complications associated with liver disease on Sunday 17 March 1996 in Amarillo, Texas. He was 54.

Liner Notes From Terry Stafford's
SAY, HAS ANYBODY SEEN MY SWEET GYPSY ROSE (Atlantic, 1973):

After being with Mercury Records for four years, a man can't help but be able to recognize the elusive quality that a sure star possesses. You can't define it; you just feel it. I felt this feeling the first time I met Terry Stafford and have been feeling it ever since. I could use the usual adjectives and say that Terry is humble, forthright, honest and sincere. I'd rather just say that Terry *is* humble, forthright, honest and sincere. He's a man with a Past *(Suspicion)*, a Present *(Sweet Gypsy Rose)* and a Future *(Stardom)*.

A songwriter sure appreciates it when a great artist cuts his tunes.

Thanks, Terry.

Rory Bourke,
Songwriter, *The Most Beautiful Girl* (#1 Pop and Country, Charlie Rich),
Baby I Lied (#4 Country, #26 Pop, Deborah Allen),
Let's Stop Talkin' About It (#1 Country, Janie Fricke) and many more.

Terry Laverne Stafford was born Saturday 22 November 1941 in Hollis, Oklahoma. He grew up 40 miles west in Amarillo, Texas, 150 miles from Lubbock, home of Buddy Holly. He made his singing debut at the Amarillo Moose Hall in 1951, performing Hank Williams tunes accompanied by neighbor Marie Wilson on piano. Terry Stafford later joined Eugene Nelson's country outfit and was exposed to western swing via Roy Terry (Sr) And The Pioneer Playboys. While attending Amarillo's Horace Mann Junior High and Palo Duro High School (Class of 1960), he sang with Rick Tucker's rock band.

As Terry Stafford told Robert Dalley on 26 August 1980, "[After graduation] I moved to Northern California and stayed with my Aunt. Later I moved to Southern California and stayed with my cousin, Ted Bevan, manager of the surf group The Surfmen. That would have been around December 1960. I went back to Texas and returned to school for a year. I was playing music on the weekends while attending college. Then I returned to Southern California in 1962. At that time The Surfmen were known as The Lively Ones and doing quite well. I started singing at talent shows at the old El Monte Legion Stadium, the Old Town Hall Party and a few other places. My cousin knew that I sang so he and The Lively Ones were kind enough to let me sing at some of the dances. The Lively Ones were recording at Bob Summers' four-track Sound House Recorders in El Monte. I decided that I would like to record at the Sound House so I picked a tune called *Suspicion* from POT LUCK WITH ELVIS (RCA album LSP 2523, Entered Billboard 14 July 1962, #4). Bob Summers played all the instruments except Ron Griffith of The Lively Ones played bass. We took the tape around to all the major labels in town but they all turned it down. Gene Weed, a DJ on radio station KFWB, heard the master and sent me to Herb Alpert at A&M Records. Herb liked *Suspicion* but decided to release another song. It did nothing."

Bob R Summers (b 1938, brother of Les Paul's Mary Ford, Iris Colleen Summers, d 30 September 1977, 53) became a driving force in Terry Stafford's career, providing entry to various label deals, producing and/or arranging tracks through at least 1983. Les Paul / Mary Ford manager Mel(ville) Shauer also exerted influence at several stages.

But Herb Alpert arranged Terry Stafford's first record: *You Left Me Here To Cry (Come On Home)* (Terry Stafford) Registered With The Library Of Congress Copyright Office 21 March 1963 / *Heartache[s] On The Way* (Don Bowman) Reg 8 February 1962 (A&M single 707, March 1963, UK Stateside single SS 225, NME Ad 27 September 1963, Canada Quality single 1527X). The melody of *Heartache[s] On The Way* reappeared in the whistling instrumental *Mexican Corn* (Herb Alpert - Don Bowman, Reg 29 May 1963) on HERB ALPERT'S TIJUANA BRASS * VOLUME 2 (A&M album SP / LP 103, May 1963).

Terry Stafford: "I got the *Suspicion* master back from A&M and Ted Bevan, my manager, took the tape to a record company on Hollywood Boulevard called Crusader Records. The owner, John Fisher, liked it. He did some remixing and mastering and promised to have it out by January 1964."

The single: *Suspicion* (Mort Shuman - Jerome Doc Pomus) Reg 2 May 1962 / *Judy* (Terry Stafford - Tony Seago) Reg 26 March 1964 (Crusader single C 101, Los Angeles Breakout Billboard 15 February 1964, Entered Billboard 22 February 1964, #3, Entered Cash Box 29 February 1964, #3, UK London single HL U 9871, NME Review 10 March 1964, Entered Record Retailer 7 May 1964, #31, Entered NME 13 May 1964, #29, Produced by John Fisher, Arranged by Bob Summers): *Every time you kiss me I'm still not certain that you love me Every time you hold me I'm still not certain that you care Suspicion Torments my heart Suspicion Keeps us apart Suspicion Why torture me*

Crusader ads correctly pegged Terry Stafford as the FIRST ARTIST TO BREAK THE BEATLE BARRIER!
Consider Billboard's Top 10:
Suspicion #7 (28 March 1964) Beatles #s 1, 2, 3, 4
Suspicion #6 (04 April 1964) Beatles #s 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Suspicion #3 (11 April 1964) Beatles #s 1, 2, 4, 7, 9
Suspicion #3 (18 April 1964) Beatles #s 1, 2, 5, 8
Suspicion #5 (25 April 1964) Beatles #s 1, 2, 3
Suspicion #8 (02 May 1964) Beatles #s 1, 3, 7
Suspicion #9 (09 May 1964) Beatles #s 2, 5

Locally *Suspicion* peaked at
#1 on Chicago's WLS (10 April 1964, Weeks Played 8)
#1 on Detroit's WKNR (5 March 1964)
#2 on Milwaukee's WOKY (12 April 1964)
#2 on Miami's WQAM (18 April 1964)
#2 on Cincinnati's WSAI (24 April 1964)
#2 on Los Angeles' KRLA (29 February 1964)
#3 on Windsor, Ontario's CKLW (25 February 1964)
#3 on Pittsburgh's KQV (23 March 1964)
#4 on Los Angeles' KFWB (Week Ending 14 March 1964)
#4 on St Louis' KXOK (4 April 1964)
#5 on Columbus, Ohio's WCOL (16 March 1964)

Terry Stafford performed *Suspicion* on Dick Clark's American Bandstand - episode aired Saturday 28 March 1964. From Friday 27 March - Sunday 5 April 1964, Terry Stafford did five shows a day at the Brooklyn Paramount Theater with Diane Renay, The Four Seasons, Rufus Thomas, Dean and Jean, The Sapphires, The Devotions, Chris Crosby and the WMCA Good Guys. Terry Stafford opened Monday 6 April 1964 at the Shelter Room, 1357 Savannah St, SE, Washington, DC. The WVOK Shower Of Stars, 18 July 1964 at the Birmingham, Alabama Auditorium featured Terry Stafford, Peter and Gordon, Jerry Lee Lewis, Gene Simmons, Roger Miller, Diane Renay, Marty Robbins, Pete Drake and Bill Black's Combo. Terry Stafford also toured New Zealand and Australia, blasting *Suspicion* to #4 on Australia's 2SM (Week Commencing 1 May 1964), #4 on 2UE (8 May 1964) and #4 on 2GB (16 May 1964).

ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHIES

For your programming use here are pertinent facts about hot disk artists. If clipped and pasted on 3 by 5 cards these biographies will help you build a convenient file of such data.

TERRY STAFFORD
(Crusader)
PM: Ted Bevan

Born and educated in Amarillo, Tex., Terry first began to think seriously in terms of his present career while singing for school dances the songs of his two idols, Elvis Presley and the late Buddy Holly. Through the help of his biggest fan, his mother, he went to Hollywood. After two years of playing night clubs and record hops, he was heard by John Fisher and Les Worden, executives of the newly formed Crusader Record Company. They were so impressed that they rushed Terry to a studio where he recorded "Suspicion," a song previously waxed by Elvis Presley.

This tall Texan (six feet three inches) is a sports enthusiast. In high school he earned letters in basketball, baseball and football, in addition to winning awards for horseback riding and water skiing.

LATEST RECORD: "Suspicion" is No. 49 on Billboard's Hot 100 this week.

With *Suspicion* still in Billboard's Top 10, Crusader issued Terry Stafford's SUSPICION! (Crusader album CLP 1001, Billboard Ads 18 and 25 April 1964, Billboard Pop Spotlight Pick 9 May 1964, Entered Billboard 16 May 1964, #81, Produced by John Fisher, Arranged by Bob Summers, Engineered by Bob Summers and Paul Elmore, Liner Notes by KFWB's Gene Weed, d 5 August 1999, 64). Throughout the album unidentified sighing *Suspicious* females (*Ooo Ooo!*) provided spectacular contrast to Terry Stafford's deep expressive vocals:

01. *Suspicion* (Mort Shuman - Jerome Doc Pomus)
Reg 2 May 1962
02. *Margarita* (Sid Wayne - Ben Weisman) Reg 9 April 1964
03. *Playing With Fire* (Sid Wayne - Ben Weisman)
Reg 9 April 1964
04. *Invitation To A Kiss* (Jerome Doc Pomus - Alan Jeffereys)
Reg 8 April 1964
05. *Slowly But Surely* (Sid Wayne - Ben Weisman)
Reg 12 June 1963
06. *For You My Love* (Fred Wise - Ben Weisman)
Reg 9 April 1964

Side 2

07. *She Wishes I Were You* (Buddy Mize - Paul Nuckles)
Reg 8 July 1963
08. *Pocket Full Of Rainbows* (Fred Wise - Ben Weisman)
Reg 20 September 1960
09. *Everything I Need* (Sid Wayne - Ben Weisman)
Reg 9 April 1964
10. *I'll Touch A Star* (Fred Wise - Ben Weisman - Dee Fuller)
Reg 9 April 1964
11. *Everybody Has Somebody* (Wink Martindale)
Reg 3 April 1964
12. *Kiss Me Quick* (Jerome Doc Pomus - Mort Shuman)
Reg 11 August 1961

While *Suspicion's* million-selling B side *Judy* (referring to Terry's sister, Judy, Mrs Earl Snead) was apparently deemed unsuitable, Elvis Presley composer Ben Weisman (b 16 November 1921) penned 5 tunes especially for the SUSPICION! album. *Till Love Comes To You* (Sid Wayne - Ben Weisman, Reg 9 April 1964) remained unreleased until the grey area TERRY STAFFORD GLOBE COLLECTORS GOLD, Vol. 14 (CD 1001/18, 1993). KFWB's Wink Martindale (game show host author of That Was Elvis To Me) contributed *Everybody Has Somebody*. Buddy Mize offered *She Wishes I Were You* (the best song Bryan Ferry never recorded) later titled *She* Still *Wishes I Were You* by The Gosdin Brothers (Bakersfield International single BIP 1006, Arranged by Gary S Paxton). *Kiss Me Quick* was again drawn from POT LUCK WITH ELVIS. *Pocket Full Of Rainbows* came from Elvis' GI BLUES (RCA album LSP 2256 Entered Billboard 31 October 1960, #1) and *Slowly But Surely* from Elvis' FUN IN ACAPULCO (RCA album LSP 2756, Entered Billboard 21 December 1963, #3). Check out the superb SUSPICION! album (COL CD 5024, 28 April 1994, 31:05, Mega-Stereo except *Suspicion).*

Taking notice of Terry Stafford, RCA suddenly issued a new (old) single by Elvis Presley With The Jordanaires: *Kiss Me Quick* [Recorded 23 June 1961] / *Suspicion* [Recorded 19 March 1962] (RCA single 477 0639). *Kiss Me Quick* Entered Billboard 2 May 1964, peaking at #34. Elvis' *Suspicion*, on the other hand, Entered Billboard 9 May 1964 at #112 (Terry Stafford #9) and peaked at #103 the week ending 23 May 1964 (Terry Stafford #19).

To follow *Suspicion*, Crusader chose *I'll Touch A Star* (Fred Wise - Ben Weisman - Dee Fuller) Reg 9 April 1964 / *Playing With Fire* (Sid Wayne - Ben Weisman) Reg 9 April 1964 (Crusader single C 105, Billboard Late Single Spotlight 9 May 1964, Entered Billboard 16 May 1964, #25, Entered Cash Box 23 May 1964, #22, UK London single HL U 9902, NME Review 15 May 1964, Produced by John Fisher, Arranged by Bob Summers). Billboard: Soft and tender ballad in the same vein as Terry's recent hit *Suspicion*. Lad delivers the tune romantically with treble organ notes permeating the background for special effects. *I'll Touch A Star* hit #14 on Detroit's WKNR (4 June 1964), #19 on Wilkes-Barre's WARM (13 June 1964), #23 on Pittsburgh's KQV (16 June 1964) and #24 on Los Angeles' KFWB (13 and 20 June 1964). Dick Clark's American Bandstand aired Terry Stafford performing *I'll Touch A Star* on 18 July 1964. Vocal and Instrumental cover versions of *I'll Touch A Star* quickly appeared: Bobby Brooks (HIT single 127, May 1964) and TEEN HITS PLAYED THE CLEBANOFF WAY (Mercury album SR 60929 / MG 20929).

Crusader then issued Terry Stafford's non-LP *Follow The Rainbow* (Mike Harris) Reg 29 July 1964 / *Are You A Fool Like Me?* (Genevieve Elizabeth Paternoster) Reg 29 July 1964 (Crusader single CRU 109, Billboard Hot Pop Spotlight 8 August 1964, Entered Billboard 22 August 1964, #101, UK London single HLU 9923, 25 October 1964, Arranged by Bob Summers). Taking a cue from the SUSPICION! album cut *Pocket Full Of Rainbows,* the custom-crafted *Follow The Rainbow* was equal parts *Suspicion* and *I'll Touch A Star*. Billboard: Another relaxing sound from young Stafford. Sounds like this could be his third hit in a row. *Follow The Rainbow* got at least as high as #40 on Los Angeles' KRLA (24 August 1964).

Suspicion
Why torture me

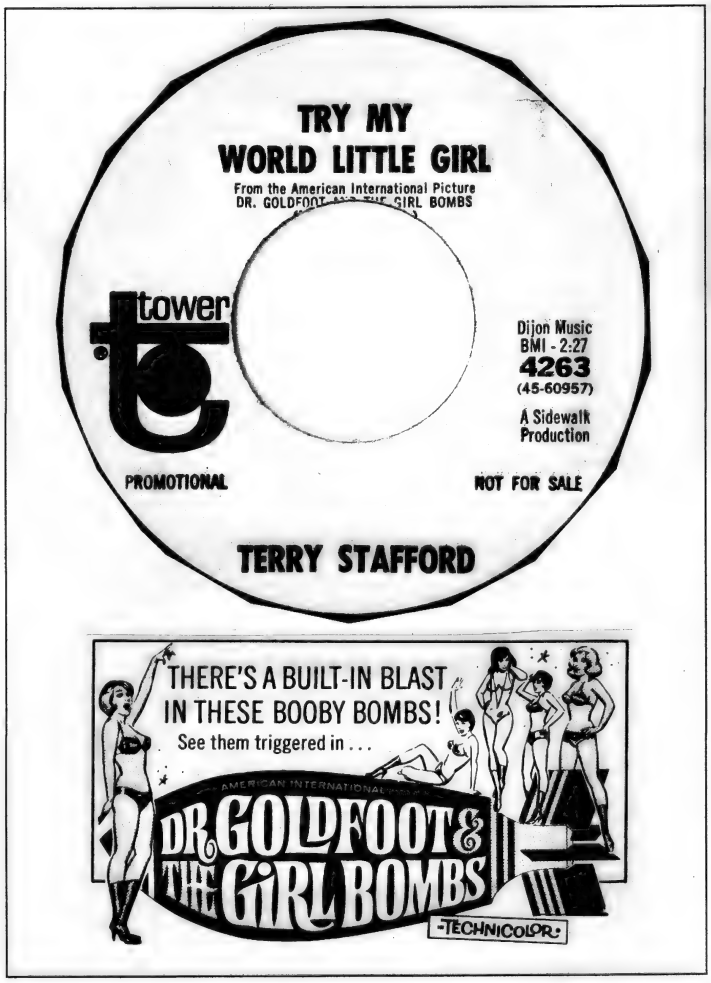
Phil Spector associate Jack Nitzsche came on board to arrange Terry Stafford's final Crusader single: *A Little Bit Better* (Vernon Wayne McEntire) Reg 5 October 1964 / *Hoping* (Pat Vegas - Hal Klee) Reg 16 October 1964 (Crusader single 110, Billboard Hot Pop Chart Special 7 November 1964). Nitzsche had recently arranged The Ronettes' *Walking In The Rain* (Entered Billboard 24 October 1964).

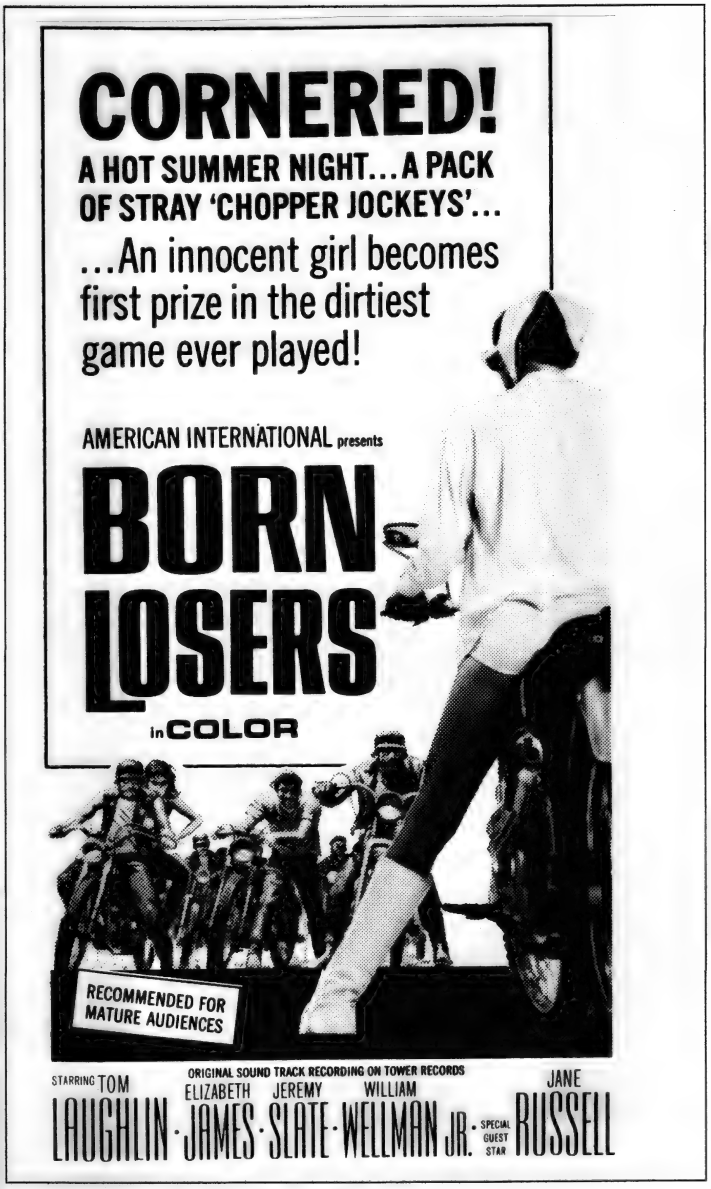
One harbors *Suspicions* that Terry Stafford sang on at least one side of Stan Lee Black's *Be Bop A Lula / Raining In My Heart* (Almo International single 222, A Division Of A&M Records, [June] 1965, Produced by Terry Stafford and Mike Harris, Arranged by Bob Summers). Fellow Texan and former Cricket Jerry Naylor rendered Terry Stafford's Get Smart-inspired *Would You Believe (Crying)* (Terry Stafford) Reg 17 January 1966 (Tower single 214, February 1966, Produced by Mike Curb for Sidewalk Productions, Arranged and Conducted by Bob Summers).

Terry Stafford resurfaced with *Forbidden* (Bobby Lile) / *Out Of The Picture* (Tommy Boyce - Bobby Hart) (Mercury single 72538, Billboard and Cash Box Reviews 19 February 1966, Produced by Bob Summers). Cash Box Best Bets: Stafford kicks off his new Mercury career with this interesting, medium-paced chorus-backed weeper all about a poor rich lad who can't be seen with the rich gal of his dreams. Cut has a real catchy rhythmic danceable riff. *Forbidden* had been recorded earlier by Bob Moline (Imperial single 66065, Billboard Review 26 September 1964, Produced by John Fisher, Arranged by Bob Summers) and later by future Tracy Chapman producer David Kershenbaum (Capitol single 2191, May 1968). *Out Of The Picture* was previously issued by The Reflections (Golden World single GW 24, Billboard Review 10 July 1965). On Saturday 30 and Sunday 31 May 1964 Terry Stafford rocked The Bronx at Freedomland In The Moonbowl with The Reflections, The Shirelles, Lesley Gore and King Curtis and His Orchestra.

Next Terry Stafford released the retro *When Sin Stops - Love Begins* (Bob Venable - Norman Petty) Reg 2 September 1958 / *Soldier Boy* (David P Jones - Theodore Williams, Jr) Reg 3 May 1955 (Sidewalk single 902, Released 29 August 1966, Billboard Review 10 September 1966, Cash Box Review 24 September 1966, Produced and Arranged by Bob Summers). Retro indeed - *When Sin Stops* was derived from The Nighthawks (Hamilton single 45 50006, Billboard Review 17 November 1958) and Waylon Jennings (Brunswick single 9 55130, Billboard Review 18 May 1959) while *Soldier Boy* echoed ELVIS IS BACK (RCA album LSP 2231, Entered Billboard 9 May 1960, #2). Terry Stafford's second Sidewalk 45 further developed his signature sound: *The Joke's On Me* (Jerry Riopelle - Phil Sloan - Steve Barri) / *A Step Or Two Behind You* (Terry Stafford) Reg 3 May 1965 (Sidewalk single 914, Released 20 March 1967, Produced and Arranged by Bob Summers).

Evoking the groove of *Suspicion*, Terry Stafford's fantastically pleading *Try My World Little Girl* (Guy Hemric - Jerry Styner) Reg 10 March 1967 (Tower single 4263 / 4264, Released 20 December 1966) graced the DR GOLDFOOT AND THE GIRL BOMBS ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SCORE (Tower album T / DT 5053, Billboard Review 4 February 1967). Immediately following *Try My World Little Girl* the DR GOLDFOOT album featured The Mad Doctors' top-grade instrumental *The Mad Mad Doctor* (Bob Summers) Reg 10 March 1967. Under the title *Waimea Bay*, a modified version appeared on THE GOLDEN BREED MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK (Capitol ST 2886, 1968). *Try My World Little Girl* (Directed by Mike Curb and Bob Summers) was not heard in the DR GOLDFOOT movie. Variety Film Review 16 September 1966: This made-in-Italy attempt to repeat the formula that clicked for AIP in Dr Goldfoot And The Bikini Machine proves, once again, that sequels rarely succeed.





Terry Stafford's *Forgive Me* (Guy Hemric - Jerry Styner) and *Alone - Never To Love Again* (Mike Curb - Bob Summers - Melville Shauer) greatly enhanced the BORN LOSERS ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK (Tower album T / DT 5082, Billboard Ad 29 July 1967, Cash Box Review 12 August 1967, Billboard Review 26 August 1967). BORN LOSERS was the first Billy Jack film. Cash Box: The original soundtrack recording of the flick BORN LOSERS starring Tom Laughlin and Jane Russell. The Sidewalk Sounds and the Summer Saxophones perform *Billy Jack's Theme* and Terry Stafford sings *Forgive Me* and *Alone - Never To Love Again*. Several other tunes are included on the disk. The LP should appeal to movie music buffs. Terry Stafford's *Forgive Me* and *Alone - Never To Love Again* saw single release on Le Credo De La Violence [Born Losers] (France Capitol single CLF 502). The BORN LOSERS DVD (Ventura Distribution) boasted Terry Stafford's *Forgive Me* at 17:36 - 18:05 (Chapter 8) and 1:14:08 - 30. Strangely Terry Stafford's anthem *Alone - Never To Love Again (Billy Jack's Theme)* was not heard in the movie. Variety Film Review 12 July 1967: Third in American International's spread of Hell Angels pix is dramatic and topical, carrying shock impact and exploitation potential which should garner fast playing time in the wide market that caters to the subject.

Completing his movie trilogy, Terry Stafford turned to acting in WILD WHEELS Starring Terry Stafford (Huey), Don Epperson (Reb Smith) and Casey Kasem (Knife). A Fanfare Films Release of a Budd Dell production. Directed by Kent Osborne. Written by Kent Osborne and Ralph Luce. Variety Film Review 23 July 1969: The slight story of a clash between a respectable dune buggy club and an outlaw motorcycle gang is the excuse for lots of motorized activity up and down the sands of Pismo Beach, some crude sexual pawings, a few tunes and enough violence to make this sub-standard bike pic acceptable as a programmer for peripheral playoff.

The WILD WHEELS MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK (RCA album LSO 1156, Billboard 4 Star Review 23 August 1969) revealed Terry Stafford's memorable composition *Night Ride* (Arranged by Bob Summers, heard in film 28:25 - 29:59): *The dunes are quiet And the buggies are ready to roll Your eyes are full of sand You got your walker brakes in your hand You're movin' from side to side Night Ride The sun has fallen Night Ride The winds are howlin' Night Ride The dunes are callin' me.* Less worthy was *Wine, Women And Song* performed by Terry Stafford (Huey) in film 58:46 - 1:00:47. Anticipating WILD WHEELS under the early title KING OF THE ROAD, Don Epperson: *Sittin' By The Highway / How I Fell For You* (RCA single 47 9661, October 1968). Don Epperson (d 17 March 1973, 32) also cut Terry Stafford's *Butch Cassidy And The Sundance Kid* (Amaret single 116, December 1969, Produced and Arranged by Harley Hatcher). BUTCH CASSIDY AND THE SUNDANCE KID NY Times Film Review 25 September 1969. Terry Stafford later wrote *Road House Country Singer* and the unreleased *Don't Knock It Till You've Cried It* with Don Epperson.

Meanwhile Terry Stafford had issued the magnificent *Big In Dallas* (Terry Stafford) Reg 1 April 1969 / *Will A Man Ever Learn* (Terry Stafford) Reg 26 May 1969 (Warner Bros - Seven Arts single 7286, Released 15 April 1969, Produced by Bob Summers for Sidewalk Productions). Terry Stafford: "It wasn't out long and didn't make any noise. Buck Owens heard it somewhere and liked it." And so Terry Stafford's *Big In Dallas* became Buck Owens And The Buckaroos' *Big In Vegas* (Terry Stafford - Alvin E Buck Owens, Jr) Reg 23 October 1969 (Capitol single 2646, Billboard Review 25 October 1969, Entered Cash Box Country 1 November 1969, #6, Entered Billboard Country 15 November 1969, #5, Entered Cash Box Pop 29 November 1969, #97, Entered Billboard Pop 13 December 1969, #100). A live version opened The Buck Owens Show BIG IN VEGAS (Capitol album ST413, Billboard Review 17 January 1970, Entered Cash Box Country 10 January 1970, #20, Entered Billboard Country 24 January 1970, #9, Entered Billboard Pop 7 February 1970, #141). Buck Owens (d 25 March 2006, 76) altered the final verse, especially the closing line: *Well I've grown old and tired tryin' to get a break in Dallas And I guess I just don't have what it takes to make it in Dallas And my chance for fame is gone But my dream still lingers on And tonight while I'm asleep I'll make it Big In Dallas.*

BUCK OWENS & BUCKAROOS—BIG IN VEGAS

(Prod. Ken Nelson) (Writers: Owens-Stafford) (**Blue Book/Exbrook/Curb, BMI**)—Owens will soon be riding high on the country charts with this exceptional piece of material penned by the artist along with Terry Stafford. Should prove a Hot 100 winner also. Flip: "White Satin Bed" (Blue Book, BMI). **Capitol 2646**

The revised version resulted in a 1970 Citation Of Achievement Presented by Broadcast Music Inc to Terry Stafford in recognition of popularity in the Country Music field as measured by broadcast performances attained by *Big In Vegas.* Bonnie Ferguson covered *Big In Vegas* on I'LL BE THERE (Ovation album OV 1704, Sector 4 Stereo, Billboard Review 26 March 1977).

Terry Stafford devoted 1970 to writing *East Looks Like A Good Direction To Go, The Long Way Around, Pathway Of Stars* (all Reg 25 May 1970), *When Mama Comes To Town* (Reg 28 July 1970), *Plastic Princess, Willy Goes On Singing* (both Reg 3 September 1970) and three sides that appeared on Mike Curb-run MGM Records in 1971. Terry Stafford's initial MGM release saluted fellow Texan Roy Orbison: *Medley: Mean Woman Blues - Candy Man* b/w the hideously rare B side *Chilly Chicago* (Terry Stafford) Reg 25 May 1970 (MGM single K 14232, March 1971, Recorded LA 1 and 11 February 1971, Produced by Terry Stafford and Bob Summers For Don Perry Enterprises, Inc, Arranged by Bob Summers).

The 2nd MGM single was the biographical *California Dancer* (Terry Stafford) Reg 28 April 1970 / *The Walk* (Terry Stafford) Reg 3 September 1970 (MGM single K 14271, Recorded LA May 1971, Variety Review 7 July 1971, Produced by Terry Stafford and Bob Summers For Don Perry Enterprises, Inc, Arranged by Bob Summers). *California Dancer* told a tale of woe: *But her money ran short So she took a job dancing to the go-go songs Just a little something to get her by until the big break came along She fell in with a groovy crowd She learned how to drink and smoke Tune in turn on California Dancer smoked a hole in her hopes.* Variety: Terry Stafford's *California Dancer* weaves an interesting tale via pleasant vocals and folk background.

Perhaps inspired by Bob Summers' arrangement of The Mike Curb Congregation's 29 April 1971 *Put Your Hand In The Hand* (MGM album SE 4785), Terry Stafford's *The Walk* (Reg 3 September 1970) contained a catchy Christian chorus: *Do your best to make him live Bring him in to your heart and your souls He did his best to let us live He even died With his side and his hands all filled with holes.* Variety: *The Walk* is a moral ballad a la Jo South.

Terry Stafford signed to Atlantic Records (Country) in late July 1973. Cash Box: A young man with one of the biggest hits of the day nearly ten years ago, Terry Stafford is today proving that his initial success was far from a fluke. The most recent phase of Terry's career began shortly after the formation of the Atlantic Country label. John Fisher, now a west coast promotion man with Atlantic, was eating lunch in a local music business hangout, the Jolly Roger, when he spotted Terry across the room. "What are you doing?" asked John. "The next thing I knew," says Terry, "I was in Nashville recording." Producing and Arranging: Earl Ball (Earl Poole Ball, Jr), pianist for Johnny Cash, Buck Owens, The Byrds (SWEETHEART OF THE RODEO), Gram Parsons (The International Submarine Band) and The Flying Burrito Brothers.

Terry Stafford debuted on Atlantic with a Country cover of Dawn featuring Tony Orlando's *Say, Has Anybody Seen My Sweet Gypsy Rose* (Irwin Levine - L Russell Brown) Reg 7 June 1973 b/w *Amarillo By Morning* (Terry Stafford - Paul Alexander Fraser) Reg 2 August 1973 (Atlantic Country single CY 4006, Test Pressing 25 July 1973, Billboard Review 11 August 1973, Cash Box Review 18 August 1973, Entered Billboard Country 25 August 1973, #35, Entered Record World Country 8 September 1973, #36, Entered Cash Box Country 15 September 1973, #36, Entered Canada RPM Country 15 September 1973, #46). Cash Box: Artist debuts with proven chart-buster capable of crossing country. Vocal is tops. Hot fiddle won't hurt either.

Immediately benefiting from Atlantic's promotional muscle, Terry Stafford performed for 38,000 at the WBAP Country Gold Anniversary Show and Appreciation Night at Arlington's Texas Stadium, home of the Texas Rangers on Thursday 16 August 1973.

Terry Stafford's SAY, HAS ANYBODY SEEN MY SWEET GYPSY ROSE album (Atlantic SD 7282, Billboard and Cash Box Reviews 3 November 1973):

01. *Country Canary* (Terry Stafford) Reg 9 November 1973
02. *Big In Vegas* (Terry Stafford - Alvin E Buck Owens, Jr) Reg 23 October 1969
03. *Suspicion* (Mort Shuman - Jerome Doc Pomus) Reg 2 May 1962
04. *Ain't No Woman Like My Woman* (Rory M Bourke - Marion Gayle Barnhill) Reg 25 September 1973
05. *Shelly's Winter Love* (Merle Haggard) Reg 1 May 1970
06. *Amarillo By Morning* (Terry Stafford - Paul Alexander Fraser) Reg 2 August 1973

Side Two

07. *Say, Has Anybody Seen My Sweet Gypsy Rose* (Irwin Levine - L Russell Brown) Reg 7 June 1973
08. *Let's Keep The Memories Warm* (Gene Price) Reg 4 October 1973
09. *Captured* 3:27 (Rory M Bourke - Edward T Rabbitt) Reg 9 October 1973
10. *Easy To Say, Hard To Do* (Chuck Howard) Reg 5 October 1962
11. *Road House Country Singer* (Terry Stafford - Don Epperson) Reg 9 November 1973
12. *It Sure Is Bad To Love Her* (Terry Stafford) Reg 9 November 1973

Billboard: Hot on the heels of his successful single, Stafford shows his abilities here both as a writer and singer. It's an unusually powerful selection of material, and as a singer there are few better. *Country Canary* is exceptional, as are *Ain't No Woman Like My Woman, Shelly's Winter Love,* and *Amarillo By Morning.*

Cash Box: Terry Stafford's new LP is a beautifully vocalized and orchestrated album. Terry has a past dating back to the days of Beatlemania when he had a top five smash entitled Suspicion. This song certainly holds a great deal of fond memories, and it has been rearranged sounding greater than ever. The title cut of the LP is presently on the charts and looks good. Lush instrumentation compliments the rich vocals Terry offers to us.

The SAY, HAS ANYBODY SEEN MY SWEET GYPSY ROSE album included Terry Stafford's own *Big In Vegas,* a Country version of *Suspicion,* two songs by Rory Michael Bourke (Bourke and Rabbitt had previously written Sandy Posey's *You Say Beautiful Things To Me,* Columbia single 4 45360, Billboard Review 1 May 1971), the soaring and serene *Easy To Say, Hard To Do* (by Chuck Howard, Fraternity single F 901), *Shelly's Winter Love* (originally on Merle Haggard's HAG, Capitol album ST 735, Entered Billboard Country 17 April 1971, #1) and reinforcing the ever-present connections to Bakersfield, California, *Let's Keep The Memories Warm* (performing on *Country Canary,* Gene Price had also written *White Satin Bed,* the B side of Buck Owens' *Big In Vegas* 45).

The SAY, HAS ANYBODY SEEN MY SWEET GYPSY ROSE album was recorded in Nashville at Jack Clement Studios, 3102 Belmont Blvd (Engineers Charlie Tallent, Ronnie Dean) and Pete (Drake)'s Place, 809 18th Ave (Engineers Scottie Moore, Stan Kesler). Personnel: Billy Sanford, Jimmy Capps, Tommy Allsup, Leon Rhodes, Reggie Young, Steve Gibson, Gary S Paxton (Guitar), Lloyd Green, Pete Drake, Weldon Myrick (Steel Guitar), Johnny Gimble, James Buchanan, Shorty Lavender (Fiddle, Strings), Charlie McCoy (Organ, Vibes, Harpsichord), Ron Oates, Pig Robbins (Piano), Henry Strzelecki, Joe Allen (Bass), Jerry Carrigan, Kenny Malone (Drums) and The Nashville Edition: Joe Babcock, Hurshel Wiginton, June Page, Dolores Edgin, Jackie Allen (Backing Vocals).

The SAY, HAS ANYBODY SEEN album was a vital part of the initial Atlantic Country Launch. NEW RELEASES FROM ATLANTIC COUNTRY (Billboard and Cash Box Ads 20 October 1973, Atlantic album PR 193 White Label Promo):
732959/60 THIS IS HENSON CARGILL COUNTRY SD 7279
732961/2 DAVID ROGERS FAREWELL TO THE RYMAN SD 7283 Δ 18365 (1)/-X
732963/4 TERRY STAFFORD SAY, HAS ANYBODY SEEN MY SWEET GYPSY ROSE SD 7282 Δ 18353 (1)/-X (1)
732965/6
732967/8 DON ADAMS ON HIS WAY SD 7280
732969/70 MS. MARTI BROWN SD 7278 Δ 18382 (1)/-X (1)
732971/2 NOW PRESENTING TROY SEALS SD 7281

Atlantic Signs Terry Stafford

Atlantic Records announced the signing of Terry Stafford to an exclusive long-term recording contract. Pictured (from left) are producer Earl Ball, Atlantic Records Nashville chief Rick Sanjek, Stafford, and Atlantic Los Angeles promotion man John Fisher.

Stafford's Two Sides

NASHVILLE — Due to heavy radio response, Atlantic Records has re-serviced all radio stations on the B side of the Terry Stafford record "Say, Has Anybody Seen My Sweet Gypsy Rose". The push side is "Amarillo By Morning" written by Terry Stafford and Paul Fraser.

The man responsible for breaking "Amarillo By Morning" is Jim Christofferson, P.D. at KDJW in Amarillo, Texas where "Amarillo By Morning" has been the number one record for the past five weeks. There is also movement in Amarillo to make the song the official city song and the theme song of 1974 Amarillo rodeo.

One song remained unreleased from the SAY, HAS ANYBODY SEEN MY SWEET GYPSY ROSE album sessions: *When Mama Comes To Town* (Terry Stafford) Reg 28 July 1970: *I'll take all the wine from the cupboard Tell all the girls I know not to come around And I'll act just like the boy that went away When Mama Comes To Town*. Garland Frady (d 27 May 2004, 63) had previously recorded *When Mama Comes To Town* (Beverly Hills single 45 9363, Billboard Review 26 June 1971, Produced by Terry Stafford For Don Perry Ent, Inc) as well as the rodeo perennial *Ft. Worth, I Love You* (Owens B Castleman - Michael Martin Murphey) / *Mr. Bojangles* (Jerry Jeff Walker) Broncho single BJ 7112 and Paula single P 1242, 1971, Produced by Terry Stafford.

Terry Stafford's second Atlantic Country charter was the B side of the first: *Amarillo By Morning* (Atlantic Country single CY 4006, Entered Cash Box Country Looking Ahead 3 November 1973, Entered Cash Box Country 15 December 1973, #37, Entered Billboard Country 1 December 1973, #31, Entered Record World Country 15 December 1973, #50, Entered Canada RPM Country 26 January 1974, #38).

Cash Box 17 November 1973: Due to heavy radio response, Atlantic Records has re-serviced all radio stations on the B side of the Terry Stafford record *Say, Has Anybody Seen My Sweet Gypsy Rose*. The push side is *Amarillo By Morning* written by Terry Stafford and Paul Fraser. The man responsible for breaking *Amarillo By Morning* is Jim Christofferson, PD at KDJW in Amarillo, Texas where *Amarillo By Morning* has been the number one record for the past five weeks. There is also movement in Amarillo to make the song the official city song and the theme song of the 1974 Amarillo rodeo.

Rodeo rider Chris LeDoux (d 9 March 2005, 56) covered *Amarillo By Morning* on SINGS OF HIS LIFE AS A RODEO MAN (self released album 1975, Capitol 15 August 1991, Capitol Nashville/EMI 20 March 2007). *Amarillo By Morning* later found new audiences in El Paso, Dallas and Houston clubs via Terry Bullard's career-defining version (Cole Cash single CC 801, Billboard Review 26 July 1980, Produced by John Fisher For Fish - Mann Enterprises). Another career-defining version by Kelly Schoppa (Bellaire single 5099, AMARILLO BY MORNING album, Bellaire LP 1101, Produced by Tommy Melder) also received considerable exposure.

George Strait heard the buzz and issued his smash *Amarillo By Morning* (MCA single 52162, Pub 14 January 1983, Billboard Review 5 February 1983, Entered Billboard Country 12 February 1983, #4) originally on STRAIT FROM THE HEART (MCA album 5320, Entered Cash Box Country 3 July 1982, #11, Entered Billboard Country 17 July 1982, #18). After George Strait opened the gate, Moe Bandy, Clifton Jansky, Asleep At The Wheel, John Arthur Martinez, Don Cherry, Jim Baird, Road Side and Nokie Edwards And The Light Crust Doughboys recorded *Amarillo By Morning*.

Terry Stafford's most successful Atlantic chart single was *Captured* 2:13 Edit (Rory M Bourke - Edward T Rabbitt) Reg 9 October 1973 / *It Sure Is Bad To Love Her* (Terry Stafford) Reg 9 November 1973 (Atlantic Country single CY 4015, Short / Long *Captured* DJ 45 Released 19 February 1974, Cash Box and Record Word Reviews 9 March 1974, Billboard Review 16 March 1974, Entered Cash Box Country 9 March 1974, #18, Entered Billboard Country 23 March 1974, #24, Entered Record World Country 6 April 1974, #24, Billboard half page Ad 13 April 1974 LET TERRY STAFFORD CAPTURE YOU). Cash Box: An up-tempo tune that is at once captivating, it captures the ears of the listener, and Terry's vocal is smooth. Great steel guitar and background vocal mark Terry's capture by the heart of a girl an experience to celebrate this bright record that is certain to make a most definite mark.

Terry Stafford flew to England to appear in the Sixth International Festival Of Country Music, Empire Pool Wembley, Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 April 1974. Melody Maker devoted five pages to the Festival, including a prominent half page ad spotlighting Terry Stafford & David Rogers and listing Henson Cargill, Don Adams, Ms Marti Brown, Troy Seals, Doug Sahm, Darrell McCall and Willie Nelson: THE COUNTRY SIDE OF ATLANTIC.

Billboard 27 April 1974: LONDON - European indoor attendance records were set this year as more than 25,000 fans attended the 6th International Festival Of Country Music at Wembley Pool near here. Two packed houses plus visitors to exhibitions swelled the total, according to promoter Mervyn Conn. It was, from the standpoint of presentation, also the greatest of the festivals, with virtually every artist receiving encores, standing ovations and thunderous applause. Newcomer Terry Stafford of Atlantic was still another whose songs were recognized and heavily applauded. Exhibitors again did a brisk business at the booths, selling albums by the thousands and introducing new product. Import albums, however, figured heavily in the display racks of a number of the record companies and undoubtedly the recent industry crises played a major role in the cutback of home pressed albums. The whole range of the Atlantic Country catalog, featuring many new names to the UK buyers, rested with import albums.

Terry Stafford's Atlantic album was not manufactured in the UK. But his current single, *Captured* (2:13) b/w *It Sure Is Bad To Love Her* was pressed to capitalize on the Wembley performance (UK Atlantic single K 10435).

Back in the US, Terry Stafford performed numerous times at the legendary Palomino, 6907 Lankershim Blvd, North Hollywood, California. Seating approximately 400, The Palomino reigned as the Academy Of Country Music (ACM) Nightclub from 1965 to 1979. As weekly Barn Dance host Ronnie Mack told the Los Angles Times, "It's the second most important building in Country Music in the United States, next to the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville." Billboard 16 March 1974: PALOMINO, LOS ANGELES - Terry Stafford (Atlantic) first surfaced some 10 years ago with *Suspicion*, a gigantic rock hit. Then, like many during the early 60's, he just as quickly disappeared. Now he's back as a country singer and, given a chance to do his own material, quite a commendable one. Stafford possesses a good voice and an easygoing stage personality, and when singing his hits, such as his Country cover of *Say Has Anybody Seen My Sweet Gypsy Rose, Amarillo By Morning* and the still popular *Suspicion*, is a solid act. Given the fact that he is just beginning to find his way in Country, Stafford's performance here was quite successful and he had little trouble winning over the Palomino crowd. He should have no difficulty retaining a solid foothold in the country field.

Terry Stafford also performed at The Palomino 11 May 1974, just days before his final Atlantic recording sessions at Jack Clement Studio in Nashville. While 13 songs were cut, only two sides saw release: *Stop If You Love Me / We've Grown Close* (Atlantic Country single CY 4026, Billboard and Record World Reviews 10 August 1974, Entered Billboard Country 24 August 1974, #69, Entered Record World Country 14 September 1974, #65, Entered Cash Box Country 21 September 1974, #61). Billboard: A very smooth song and a sad but commercial story. It's well produced and has all the necessary ingredients. Bourke also has made his place among the leading writers.

And so Terry Stafford was left high and dry when Atlantic abruptly shut down its Country operation, Friday 6 September 1974. Atlantic veteran promo man John Fisher supervised the phasing out of the Nashville office.

TERRY STAFFORD: WE'VE GROWN CLOSE (Unreleased Atlantic album SD 18105, Masters Assigned 22 May 1974, Assembled July 1974):

01. *Where Have You Been All My Life*
02. *Woman Sensuous Woman* (Gary S Paxton) Reg 17 April 1972
03. *Chilly Chicago* (Terry Stafford) Reg 25 May 1970
04. *Dang'd Ole Rodeo* (Terry Stafford - Paul Fraser)
Reg 13 June 1974 EU498436
05. *I'm Alright, I'm Okay*
06. *It's A Matter Of Time* (Clive Westlake) Reg 31 July 1972
07. *We've Grown Close* (Frederick P Sanjek)
Reg 13 June 1974 EU498431

Side Two

08. *Stop If You Love Me* (Rory M Bourke)
Reg 24 April 1974 EU477587
09. *I Wouldn't Want To Love There* (Terry Stafford)
Reg 13 June 1974 EU498432
10. *Don't Knock It Till You've Cried It* (Terry Stafford - Don Epperson) Reg 13 June 1974 EU498434
11. *Blue Goes With Anything* (Terry Stafford - Paul Fraser)
Reg 13 June 1974 EU498435
12. *The Lovin' Of Your Life* (Dallas Frazier - Sanger Shafer)
Reg 31 August 1972
13. *Darlin' Think It Over* (Terry Stafford)
Reg 13 June 1974 EU498433
14. *Captured* 2:13 Edit (Rory M Bourke - Edward T Rabbitt)
Reg 9 October 1973

The WE'VE GROWN CLOSE album comprised *Woman Sensuous Woman* originally by Don Gibson (Hickory single 1638, Billboard Country #1), *Chilly Chicago* originally MGM single K 14232, March 1971, *It's A Matter Of Time* by Elvis Presley (RCA single 74 0769, Billboard Country #36), *We've Grown Close* penned by Atlantic Country label General Manager Rick Sanjek and *The Lovin' Of Your Life* by Penny DeHaven (Mercury single 73384, Entered Cash Box Country 30 June 1973, #5).

WE'VE GROWN CLOSE Album Personnel: Billy Sanford, Jimmy Capps, Glenn Keener, Fred Carter, Jr, Tommy Allsup, Chip Young (Guitar), Pete Drake, Lloyd Green (Steel Guitar), Bergen White, Sheldon Kurland, David Vanderkoot, Marvin Shantry, Byron Bach, Gary Vanosdale, George Binkley, Lennie Haight, Stephanie Woolf, Carl Gorodetzky, Donald Teal, Brenton Banks (Strings), Pig Robbins, Tony Migliore, Earl Ball, Charlie McCoy (Keyboards), Joe Allen, Henry Strzelecki (Bass), Kenny Malone, Jerry Carrigan, Larry London, Jimmy Isbell (Drums), The Nashville Edition: Dolores Edgin, June Ricki Page, Hurshel Wiginton, Joe Babcock, Jackie Allen (Backing Vocals), The White Tornado is added on *Woman Sensuous Woman,* The Gary S Paxton Singers (Gary S Paxton, Diane Tidwell, Laverna Moore, Larry Strzelecki) replace The Nashville Edition on *I'm Alright, I'm Okay* and *It's A Matter Of Time.*

Terry Stafford's WE'VE GROWN CLOSE album would have been released autumn 1974:

743179/80 Jerry Goodman Jan Hammer LIKE CHILDREN
NE 430 Billboard Review 9 November 1974
743181/2 David Newman NEWMANISM SD 1662
Billboard Review 12 October 1974
743183/4 Mike Oldfield HERGEST RIDGE VR 13-109
Billboard Review 7 September 1974
743185/6 Terry Stafford WE'VE GROWN CLOSE
Atlantic album SD 18105
743187/8 Oscar Brown, Jr FRESH SD 18106
Washington Post Ad 28 November 1974, *Rilly?* on SOUL EXPLOSION PART 2 ATL PR 218,
Billboard Ad 7 December 1974
743189/90
743191/2 Pat Rebillot FREE FALL SD 1663
743193/4 Bobby Short MAD TWENTIES SD 1664
743195/6 J Geils Band NIGHTMARES AND OTHER
SD 18107 Billboard Review 12 October 1974
743197/8 Rolling Stones IT'S ONLY ROCK AND ROLL
COC 79101 Billboard Review 26 October 74
743199/200 Peggy Lee LET'S LOVE SD 18108
Billboard Review 5 October 74

Terry Stafford regrouped at Melodyland, Motown's new Country label. Cash Box 30 November 1974: John Fisher has been appointed Country and Projects Coordinator of Melodyland Records Nashville operation. Fisher will be responsible for all operations of the Nashville office and will coordinate promotion and sales for the label with [former Atlantic promotion man] John Widdicombe. Fisher will also be responsible for the acquisition of new artists. Prior to joining Melodyland, he was associated with Atlantic Records for nine years in many facets including National Country promotion director.

Borrowing a tune from his cancelled second Atlantic album, Terry Stafford released the excellent *Darling Think It Over* (Terry Stafford) / *I Can't Find It* (Terry Stafford) (Melodyland single ME 6009F, Reg 10 April 1975, Billboard and Record World Reviews 26 April 1975, Cash Box Review 10 May 1975). Record World: There's strong *Suspicion* that Terry has *Captured* a hit here. No need to *Think It Over* -- put it on. Cash Box: Terry's first release for Melodyland Records is produced by Earl Ball and is already gaining airplay. He implores his lady to *Think It Over* before she leaves him. Vocals are deep and rich and will help this one see more action regionally and nationally. As per Sharon Davis' Motown: The History, a second Melodyland single was scheduled: *Reba / She's A Fire Out Of Control* (Unreleased Melodyland single ME 6022F, October 1975).

Terry Stafford: "In 1975 I got a band together, including Ron Griffith of The Lively Ones and we toured Colorado. We had a decent sound but the group folded. I went back as a solo act at clubs like George's Roundup in Long Beach and Nashville West in El Monte. I worked some clubs in Northern California, New Mexico and Utah. Johnny Fortune (John Stephen Sudetta, d 8 January 2006, 62) played guitar for me and acted as my musical director. I also toured extensively in New England and Canada with Tom Starr and The Don Mayberry Band."

Terry Stafford hit the charts with a reissue of his 1973 Atlantic Country classic *It Sure Is Bad To Love Her* (Casino GRT single 113, Entered Billboard Country 12 March 1977, #94). *It Sure Is Bad To Love Her* closed Side Two of the SAY, HAS ANYBODY SEEN MY SWEET GYPSY ROSE album: *She's everything in a woman that I could ever want And she can be so nice to me When she tries to be But she don't People always lookin' up to her While she's lookin' down on me It seems so easy to love where she's at But she won't let that be And she won't be satisfied Till she's got wings and she can fly Over everybody's head It Sure Is Bad To Love Her.*

Terry Stafford: "I signed with Firstline, now known as Frontline Records in December 1979. John Fisher was very instrumental in getting me signed with Frontline. It seems that most of the success I have had a singer has been because of John Fisher's involvement. After signing with Frontline, I went to Nashville in January 1980 and recorded a good album using Tammy Wynette's studio and top line session men. I wrote three of the tunes." Terry Stafford's Frontline album was apparently not released but one single trickled out: *Everybody Loves A Love Song* (Robert John Jones - Jerry Lee Taylor) Frontline single FLS 710, Billboard Review 21 March 1981.

According to composer Robert A Jenkins, Terry Stafford cut a version of *(The) Devil's Den* as released by Jack Greene (Firstline album FLP 7012, Billboard Review 21 June 1980, Firstline single FLS 709, Billboard Review 18 October 1980, Entered Billboard Country 1 November 1980, #71).

At the time of his greatest mainstream success as a songwriter, Terry Stafford entered his Country - Gospel Underground period, issuing *(Lord, Can You And Me Get) Back Together* (Terry Stafford) / *Life's Railway To Heaven* (M E Abbey - Charles Tillman - J R Baxter) (Eastland single ERS 101, 1983, Produced and Arranged by Bob Summers). The poignant A side asked, *Lord Can You And Me Get Back Together? Can I talk to you like I did When I was young? Or has it been too long Since we've been together? Or can I still get some help From someone?* The B-side, *Life's Railway To Heaven,* was a traditional Gospel number dating to the late 1890s - early 1900s, most famous by Patsy Cline (Recorded 3 July 1959, *Dear God* EP Decca ED 2759, Released 10 June 1963).

1985 saw the first of 4 singles on John Fisher's independent Nashville-based Player International label: *Déjà Vu* (Terry Stafford) / *Texas Moon Palace* (Terry Stafford) (Player International single PI 113, Billboard Reviews 19 and 26 January 1985, Produced by John Fisher). Currently airing on YouTube: Terry Stafford performing *Texas Moon Palace* on Joel Samuels' Backstage Pass, Phoenix, Arizona: *Did you ever look up On a clear Texas night And get a sky full of stars in your eyes? So shine on while they're playin' our song We heard it in Houston and Dallas But we'll spend the night where the feelin' is right Here at the Texas Moon Palace.*

Love's Been Hell On Me (Jack Strong) / *Long Haul Fever* (Terry Stafford) (Player International single PL 115, Billboard Review 31 August 1985: *Vocal, production and hooks right on the mark.* Produced by John Fisher) and *They're Growing Grass In The Old Corn Field* (Lyle Hoover Augustine) Reg 21 February 1986 / *Strangers With The Same Last Name* (Daryl Glenn Colyer - Larry Edwin Nix - Jack Smart, Jr - Dorval Lynn Smith) (Player International single PI 125) were followed by Terry Stafford's final charter, *Lonestar Lonesome* (John Collins Cunningham - Stephen Clifford Stone) / *Falling (It's A Long Way From Hollis, Oklahoma)* (Terry Stafford) (Player International single PI 134, Entered Billboard Country 18 February 1989, #89, Billboard Review 25 February 1989). Billboard: *The Texas sentiments are run-of-the-mill, but Stafford conveys them with conviction.*

While Terry Stafford had the only charting version of *Lonestar Lonesome,* the song had a pre-history by Danny Newsome (Soundwaves single NSD / SW4669 Published 5 April 1982) and David Frizzell (on FAMILY'S FINE, BUT THIS ONE'S ALL MINE, WB album 23688-1, Billboard Review 3 July 1982) and a post-history by Tracey Ramsey (Player International single PI 143, Produced by John Fisher, d 14 September 2001, 69). *Falling,* on the other hand, was pure Terry Stafford autobiography with acrophobia: *It's a long long way from Hollis, Oklahoma To the top of the Hollywood hills Her love let me drop to the bottom from the top And the Falling is hurting me still.*

Terry Stafford performed *Suspicion* on TV's Solid Gold, episode aired 25 and 26 January 1987. New Year's Eve 1987 found Terry Stafford with Sonny Bono, Dion, Tommy James and Peter Noone at the Grand Opening Of The Palm Springs Convention Center, an event memorialized on ROCKIN' THE NIGHT AWAY (Silver Eagle album SE 10712, 1988). Terry Stafford also starred with Freddy Cannon, Sonny Knight, Jack Scott and Paul and Paula as K-EARTH 101 FM Presented The Legends Of Rock N Roll at The Greek Theatre in Los Angeles 5 and 6 October 1990. At The Greek, Terry distributed custom made round metal yellow and gold enamel mini-Crusader label *Suspicion* pins to the faithful.

50 SOLID GOLD—Music; 60 min.
Wang Chung, Billy Preston, Toto, Restless Heart, Chico DeBarge, Little Richard (interview), Terry Stafford (flashback). Music: "Let's Go," "Could This Be Love," "Talk to Me."

Terry Stafford attended the Colorado Rockies' first home game at Denver's Mile High Stadium 9 April 1993 and soon wrote *Rockies Rock* (Colorado is a beautiful place The Rockin' Rockies are in your face). He also created *Bottle Of Lightning* (Reg 19 March 1993) with Jim Novak and *One Life Gone* (Reg 19 March 1993) and *Don't Let 'm Take You Down* (Reg 3 April 1995) with Hawai'i legend Liko Martin (Henry Frederick Martin, Jr), composer - performer of the Hawai'i sovereignty struggle anthem *Hawai'i Loa Ku Like Kakou, All Hawai'i Stand Together.*

After Terry Stafford passed away in March 1996, Curb issued the half-Crusader tribute BEST OF TERRY STAFFORD (Curb CD D2 77867, 15 October 1996, Tower Records Pulse! September and November 1996, 24:36):

01. *Suspicion*
02. *Pocket Full Of Rainbows*
03. *I'll Touch A Star*
04. *Kiss Me Quick*
05. *Everything I Need*
06. *Alone - Never To Love Again (Billy Jack's Theme)*
07. *The Joke's On Me* (Alternate) Previously Unreleased
08. *Am I Fooling Myself* (Terry Stafford) Previously Unreleased
09. *Do You Miss Me* (Terry Stafford) Previously Unreleased
10. *If You Got The Time* (Terry Stafford) Previously Unreleased

Terry Stafford returned to the Crusader multi-tracks to cut the Italian language *Sospetto* b/w *Follow The Rainbow* (Italy London single HL 1545, August 1964). Los Seven Days recorded the horn-led *Sospecha* (Mexico Discos Peerless EPP 245/542, 1964). The kazoo-brandishing Ed Hardin (HIT single 112, March 1964) and the amazingly strident Millicent Martin (UK Parlophone single R 5120, NME 3 April 1964) covered Terry Stafford's *Suspicion,* as did Ronnie McDowell (Curb single CRB 10508 B, Billboard Reviews 14 May and 9 July 1988, Entered Billboard Country 16 July 1988, #27). Bonzo Dog Band stalwart Vivian Stanshall & His Gargantuan Chums did *Suspicion* (UK Fly single BUG 4, 1970, *Darling if you love me please show me some proof of your good intentions I'd like it on my desk in triplicate on Monday morning at the very latest).* Bob Summers' version is surely worthwhile (Unreleased MGM Master 71L 2880, September 1971). Composer Mort Shuman (d 3 November 1991, 52) even reinterpreted *Suspicion* as *Sha Mi Sha [Shami Sha]* (Philips single 40723, album PHS 700 005, 1973).

If justice is served, CD reissues (including the crucial WE'VE GROWN CLOSE album) will follow this brief article. The Man From Amarillo deserves no less.

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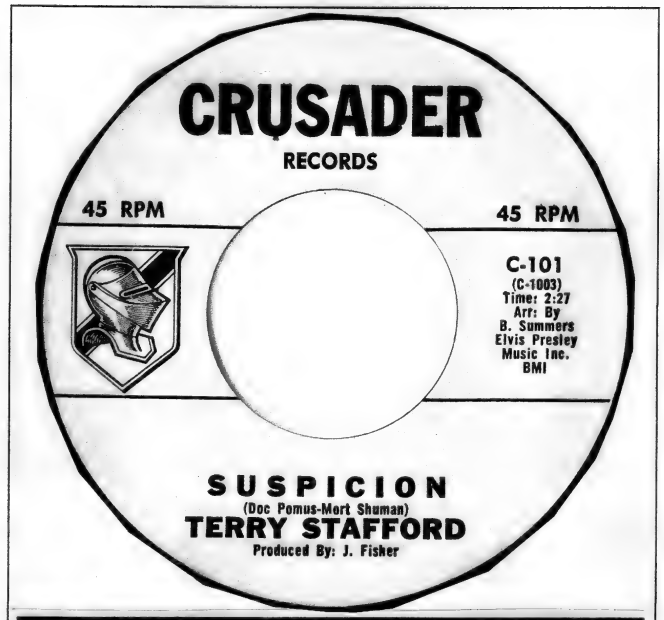


Terry receiving his gold record for "Suspicion". John Fisher is on the far left.

Special Thanks:
D K Baker
Bruce Buratti
Dugg Collins, KFDI
Robert Dalley (Goldmine #56, January 1981)
Brenda Epperson
Jean Haffner, The Record Exchange
Michael W Johnson
Steve Kolanjian
Corky Mayberry, ACM Radio Personality 1970, KLAC, KRLA, KBBQ, KDJW, *A Friend Of A Friend Of Mine* (WB single 7789, Cash Box ad 16 March 1974): "Terry Stafford had the biggest heart of anyone I have ever known in my life."
Fred Mienczeski
Jerry Schollenberger
Geoffrey Simpson
Bryan Thomas (CD Liner Notes, The Lively Ones: SURF RIDER!/SURF DRUMS and SURF CITY/SURFIN' SOUTH OF THE BORDER)

LIST - o - MANIA !!

Gary Pig Gold suggests

(in alphabetical order)

100 ALBUMS YOU SHOULD ADD TO YOUR COLLECTION

Illustrations: Plastic Crimewave unless otherwise attributed

1. **"25 All-Time Greatest Bubblegum Hits"**The Monkees, The Banana Splits, Josie and her Pussycats, a whole slew of Kasenetz-Katzery and, of course, those hallowed Archies as well: What better possible way to kick off a countdown?

2. **Allin, G.G. "The Troubled Troubadour"**At the time – roughly the length and breadth of the Reagan administration – some called this p(unk)-rock, some called it performance art, some called it a big pile of fecal matter (quite literally, as it sometimes turned out) and others just called the cops when the poop actually *did* begin to hit the fans. But in this mega-jaded age of Yank Idols and Fox News, G.G. in a way can seem quite quaint and oddly reassuring given half a chance, or even half an ear.

3. **Animals "The Twain Shall Meet"** In the throes of his immediate post-original Animals, SoCal revelry, Eric Burdon produced four lysergic-drenched albums which continue to haunt the man (not to mention his most loyal followers) to this very day. Yet for the magnum opus "Sky Pilot" alone, this second in the afore-mentioned series of long-playing parables truly deserves a nice close, Bay Area listen.

4. **Ant Bee "Lunar Muzik"**Billy James (aka our Ant-Bee) has a way of surrounding himself with legends the likes of Don Preston, Hawkwind, and even Grand Funk Railroad in order to get his manic musical message fully across. And seldom has he succeeded quite so effectively as on this particular ever-swirling song cycle ...which features, not surprisingly at all you see, four-fifth's of the original Alice Cooper Band!

5. **Beach Boys "Party!"** Not only unplugged, but thoroughly *unhinged* to boot, one can distinctly hear Dennis Wilson singing John Lennon, Al Jardine wringing Bob Dylan and, far in the background, someone actually laughing at one of Mike Love Not War's one-liners. I kid you not.

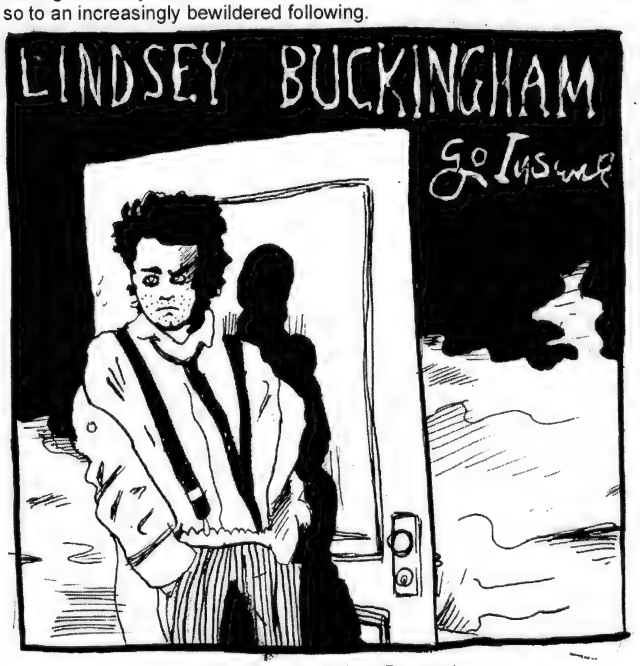
6. **Bee Gees "Brilliant from Birth"** Before Tony Manero, before the Cucumber Castle even, there were, and forever remain, these sixty-three (count 'em!) slices of rare, precious, beautiful Australian-vintage Gibbery.

7. **Berry, Chuck "The Great Twenty Eight"**Elvis may have had the pelvis (and the Colonel), but when it came straight down to it, CHUCK possessed the all-walking, duck-rocking *goods*.

8. **Blue Cheer "Vincebus Eruptum"**This IS the band, and the album, that does not jest when it claims to turn air into cottage cheese. STILL.

9. **Bono, Sonny "Inner Views"** The, uh, brains behind Sonny and Cher went so-low with this thoroughly flabbergasting 1967 long-player, an expanded version of which is sometimes available from those lovable obsessives over at Rhino Handmade!

10. **Buckingham, Lindsey "Go Insane"** The humongous Mac's resident Eraserhead had his own unique way of dealing with post-"Rumours" pressure: Lock himself up in his state-of-the-art garage issuing brilliantly cracked musical letters-from-home every ten years or so to an increasingly bewildered following.



(illustration by Robert Daytron)

11. **Candypants "Candypants"** Lisa Jenio and her band of lusty Los Angelenos read deeply between the lines of Ronnie Spector's mascara to bring hitherto unenvisioned meaning to words like "pony up" on this long-lasting SweetTart for the ears.

12. **Chad and Jeremy "Of Cabbages And Kings"** Boldly treading where Peter and Gordon had never gone before, Mr. Clyde and especially Mr. Stuart spent their next-to-last Columbia album making their BIG STATEMENT with the fully-dimensional-stereo, five-movement, seventeen-minute-plus "Progress Suite" ...which immediately leads me to ask that age-old question, "Why do you think they called it Dope?"

13. **Cheepskates "Waiting for Unta"** Live albums really should always sound exactly like this souvenir of Shane Faubert and band bar-storming Germany in the very late Eighties, the contrary cover of Peggy Lee's "Fever" certainly not withstanding.

14. **Connors, Stompin' Tom "A Proud Canadian"** He's released over fifty albums in his home and native Canada, and staunchly refuses to perform their contents anywhere else. Yet this superb twenty-track retrospective is slowly but surely leaking below the 49th parallel and, when it crosses *your* tracks, deserves both your full attention AND support.

15. **Cowsills "Global"** America's once and forever First Family of Song may have taken three whole decades to bounce back from "The Rain, The Park..." and oh so many other things, but this 1998 release not only regained the band to their past status as harmonious siblings of the highest order (and pitch!), but placed them squarely at the forefront of the entire Power Pop movement they, in their initial phase, themselves helped inspire.

16. **Dale, Dick "The Tiger's Loose"** One of the most magical (and LOUD) moments of my entire life occurred at the Golden Bear in Huntington Beach, when the King of the Surf Guitar Himself stood with his bare feet on my very ringside table to tear out a searing cut of "The Wedge." This recording of that very night indelibly proves I wasn't just CA dreaming it at all.

17. **Dead Boys "Night Of The Living Dead Boys"**Whenever these Cleveland cut-ups started singing about getting caught with the meat in their mouths, or threatened to drain their nasal cavities over the front few rows, you just had to laugh (as opposed to lunge) at how utterly entertaining Stiv and his Boys were in a goofy, sub-Aerosmith kinda way. This disc most colorfully captures them on stage at the very apex of their Carbona-sniffin' glory.

18. **Deep Purple "Deep Purple"** Just before they joined the bedenimed ranks of the Power Boogie Bands (and back when they still had a singer who looked just like Lux Interior!) Deep Purple were still forging heavy metal from such unlikely sources as Joe South and even Neil Diamond, and this eponymous effort houses those last great gasps before they started blowing stale smoke over the water instead.

19. **Donovan "HMS Donovan"** In which our fave Scottish bard bravely unplugs upon the altar of Lewis Carroll, Edward Lear and W.B. Yeats, forever ending his string of comparatively rockin' visits to the upper reaches of Billboard's Hot 100.

20. **Dowd, Johnny "Wrong Side of Memphis"**Tom Waits wages a straight-razor fight in the depths of Death Valley with Captain Beefheart and his Magic Band, all to the accompaniment of Nico fronting a Jimboless Doors ...OR: How a middle-aged moving man from upstate New York deftly reinvents the darkest underbelly of all things Americana.

21. **Dylan, Bob "Live 1966"**The Big Bob, nor anyone *else* for that matter, has yet to approach the quicksilver majesty which electrifies each and every note of this most powerful, all-eclipsing performance ...and who can blame them?

22. **Everly Brothers "Roots"** Getting back to one's, yes, Roots was all the fashion when the post-"Pepper" parade ground to a welcome halt as 60s became 70s. But, as always, Don and Phil were there first, sang it most authentically, and defied all comers to do it (or duet) any better.

23. **Firesign Theatre "I Think We're All Bozos On This Bus"**All-talking, all-bets-off non-music for the mind: Those who spent their college years under headphones, unsafely under the Firesign's spell, never ever got off at the end of the ride quite the same again. Did we??

24. **Fischer, Wild Man "An Evening With Wild Man Fischer"**There truly were some real cute kooks working the musical basins of L.A. back in those halcyon daze of yore, and not surprisingly an alarming number of them eventually ended up in the employ of F. Zappa: Alice Cooper, Lowell George, Captain Don of course and, in retrospect most significantly of all, the one, the lonely, Larry Fischer.

25. **Flamin' Groovies "Groovies' Greatest Grooves"**Once the skinny-tied brigades of that so-called New Wave had finally stumbled upon the Groovies' rich catalog of expert retro-pop, the masters themselves were already one tight pant-leg into the delete bin. But the two-dozen nouveau-nuggets in this collection save for the ages just how visionary Cyril Jordan, Roy Loney et al really had been all along.

26. **Four Freshmen "Live At Butler University with Stan Kenton and his Orchestra"**If only to witness, first-ear, the quartet's startlingly-indeed stab at, believe it or not, "Surfer Girl."

27. **Fugs "It Crawled Into My Hand, Honest"**New York City's very first alt-rockers had, by the time of this defining 1968 release, graduated from the anti-social frat-folk of their initial albums to embody all that was vile, impure, and joyously counter-culturally productive within life under the Nixon regime ...and BOY, could we ever use their ilk again right about now, no?

28. **Fuller, Bobby "The Bobby Fuller Four "**Those familiar only with "I Fought The Law" (and then, I fear, only via The Clash's tepid reading) should marvel at these 24 examples of how, under Bobby's direction, the route from Buddy Holly to the Beatles was ultimately forged.

29. **Gary Lewis and the Playboys "Legendary Masters Series"** One full hour's worth of shiny happy Hollywood rock (including a terrifyingly adept imitation of father Jerry on one track), all of which somehow set the stage for, well, Dino, Desi and Billy ...not to mention various Partridges, Bradys, and Hansons even.

30. **Gerry and the Pacemakers "Ferry Cross The Mersey"**Gerry Marsden's attempt at "Hard Day's Night"-sized big-screen stardom remains nowhere to be found, even on late-night cable-fests or YouTube even. But the *soundtrack* to the "Ferry Cross The Mersey" film is quite another matter altogether, containing some of the fiercest yet sunniest two-minute wallops of British Beat this side of ...Freddie's Dreamers (and I honestly mean that as a compliment, alright?)

31. **Guess Who? "This Time Long Ago"**A full decade before these eyes were on any American women whatsoever, Canada's homegrown Fab Four (including, in Randy Bachman and Burton Cummings, an in-house LenMac hit factory of quite some renown) were busy churning out the kind of rock, pop, and yes pop-rock that would someday become known as simply Wheatfield Soul to those in the land of the ice and snow. And "This Time Long Ago" contains an icy wealth of precisely just such memories, for the discerning Canuck-o-phile deep within us all.

32. **Hartford, John "Aereo-Plain"** As his Glen Campbell-generated "Gentle On My Mind" royalties started pouring in at a flagrant rate, John Hartford began composing instead the kind of barbed-wire bluegrass and all-round down-home dementia that would, until just before his death, keep him comfortably numb from the mush of Music City. "Aereo Plain" contains some of the man's first and greatest achievements in what would, decades later, become much better known as Newgrass and even alt.C&W in the hands and ears of those less skilled and certainly less imaginative.

33. **Holly, Buddy "What You Been A'Missin'"** Eavesdrop, if you will, as Buddy and his fearless Crickets, alongside their very own Sir George Martin (Norman Petty) somehow invent the Sound of the Swinging London Sixties a decade before the fact ...and in Clovis, New Mexico!!

34. **Hotlegs "Thinks: School Stinks"** From the ashes to ashes of Wayne Fontana's Mindbenders came Hotlegs, and their extremely pre-Burundi Beating 1970 smash "Neanderthal Man," not to mention the groundwork for what was to eventually become, for better or even worse, 10cc.

35. **Jan and Dean "Anthology Album"** I ask you: Did *any* of those Beatle Anthologies include a reel-ful of recorded-in-concert pigeon jokes ...not to mention some of the all-time, boards-down best sea-and-sidewalk-surfin' slammers this side of B. Wilson's litterbox?!!

36. **Jandek** Just take your pick out of any of the (at last count) fifty-three full-on releases in this wily Texan's canon fodder by contacting PO Box 15375 in Houston (zip 77220 ...and don't forget to tell 'em Gary the Pig sentcha!)

37. **Jelly Bean Bandits "Mirror Music"** Over a solid gold hour's worth of frat-happy, beer-and-twelve-string-drenched all-Americana as recorded completely live at the Buccaneer Nightclub in Poughkeepsie, NY, "Mirror Music" provides one supremely evocative snapshot of the State of the Art as of the night of September 3, 1967: when Rock and Roll was quickly becoming Rock, the hair (not to mention solos) were becoming increasingly long and unruly, and the Jelly Bean Bandits played and sang it all, six nights a week, over at the local roller rink.

38. **Johnson, Mark "12 in a room"** New York City holds many wonders, not the least of which was singer / songwriter / multi-instrumentalist / home-recordist-extrodinaire Mark Johnson who, in 1992, shook the very foundations of Gotham songcraft with this astounding collection of finely unpolished gems in the grand tradition of Doc Pomus, Dion DiMucci, and other such unrequited Kings of Love.

39. **King, Carole "Brill Building Legends: Complete Recordings 1958-1966"** The above-mentioned Mark's (sadly still-unreleased) "Brill Building Song" could so easily embrace each and every one of the remarkable fifty-seven demos, acetates, and bonafide classics housed in this bountiful bevy of Ms. King's earliest artifacts, some of which you'll immediately recognize from their hit re-recordings, and others you'll no doubt uncover and cherish as the dramatic, previously-unheard true blue treasures they are.

40. **King Crimson "Earthbound"** This sloppily-performed then crappily-captured-onto-cassette Contractual Obligation concert gives positive aural props to the long-held theory that there is indeed one silk-fine line

between Prog and Grunge ...and years before Primus attempted to carve an entire career out of the fact too.

41. **Kinks "Arthur or the Decline and Fall of the British Empire"** Probably the first and only time Ray(mond Douglas) Davies' more grandiose indulgences were successfully tempered by the good old rock 'n' rolling of younger brother Dave, while the songwriting remained quirky yet still fully hook-laden enough so that even the Royal Family could be lampooned all the way into the (British) Top Forty.

42. **Langley Schools Music Project "Innocence And Despair"**A lowly British Columbia grade-school music teacher suddenly decides one day to take his guitar and record collection to class, and soon he's leading his students in some of the most undeniably striking interpretations of the Beach Boys, Bowie, Wings and even Herman's Hermits songbooks ever on record ...thankfully all forever preserved now for your immediate listening (and, yes, sing-along) pleasures.

43. **Lewis, Jerry Lee "Live at the Star Club, Hamburg"**It was one tough toss-up, as you can well imagine, between including this or the late Butane James' "Live at the Apollo" landmark. But the sound of hearty young German lungs incessantly chanting "Jerra LEE!" "Jerra LEE!" tipped the matter squarely into the Killer's court I must admit.

44. **Masticators "Masticate!"** I only hope I shan't be disqualified for nominating this one coz I liked it so much I went and started a record company just so I could get it out...

45. **Miller, Roger "20th Century Masters – The Millennium Collection"** But only if you just won't opt for the so-aptly-titled "King Of The Road: The Genius Of Roger Miller" full box treatment.

46. **Million Dollar Quartet "The Complete Million Dollar Session"** Beware the dastardly-abbreviated RCA versions filed under the Presley section of your local disc bar and seek instead this full-length Elvis/Jerry Lee/Carl/and-momentarily-Johnny fest from Charly Records UK, ok?

47. **Modern Lovers "The Original Modern Lovers"** Before John Felice became a Real Kid, or David Robinson a Car; before Jerry Harrison donned his Talking Head or Jonathan Richman ever became a cult (figure),there were the Original Modern Lovers, a little song called "Roadrunner," and possibly the last band of merit to ever squirm out of Boston's lonely financial district intact. So to call these initial, Kim Fowley-supervised recordings "seminal" only *begins* to scratch the sonic surface.

48. **Monkees "Headquarters Sessions"**Turn George Michael Dolenz loose in RCA Hollywood with a tray of take-out burgers, a microphone, and an engineer testing new reverb effects, call it "Micky In Carlsbad Cavern," flesh out an additional three (!) CD's worth of recordings from the making of the Prefab's greatest-ever album, and Welcome to perhaps the world's premiere boxed set, believe it or not.

49. **Mothers of Invention "We're Only In It for the Money"** More people, sounds, lifestyles, and ideals in general ignobly perish across this album than in a whole heapful of Johnny Cash records, it's true ...but all the while with one great big grin plastered across your (and no doubt FZ's) mug, that is.

50. **Mungo Jerry "In The Summertime: Original Greatest Hits"** You know, the so-called Rockabilly Revival *really* began on the opening track of Mungo J's debut long-player in Britain over three long decades ago: a subterranean mangling of none other than Elvis' "Baby Let's Play House" which, most thankfully, reappears here in all of its murky, quasi-Sun fervor.

51. **Nelson, Rick: "In Concert, The Troubadour, 1969"** Wherein the very first cathode teen idol grows up, grows sideburns, and dern near invents the whole No Depression crusade in the process.

52. **NRBQ "You Gotta Be Loose: Recorded Live in USA"** For once I can whole-heartedly agree with Elvis Costello: NRBQ truly *are* the greatest live r 'n' r band on this, or indeed any other planet.

53. **Ochs, Phil "Gunfight at Carnegie Hall"** Defiantly draped in a gold lame suit fit for The King, and rubbing ears even deeper in it with his Pistols-caliber Buddy Holly medley, Phil's 1970 concerts made Dylan's '65 Newport Festival debacle seem so thoroughly innocuous by comparison that these tapes were only deemed releasable up in O Canada at the time.

54. **Owens, Buck "In Japan!"**Until our heroes over at Sundazed get round to re-releasing tapes of the band playing their big "Buck you!" to the Nixon White House (and in between spins of the Buckaroos' own, comparatively bloodless Carnegie Hall gunfight, naturally) one can thrill right here to the night Bakersfield's greatest twanged the living daylights out of Tokyo.

55. **Paul Revere and the Raiders "The Essential Ride '63-'67"** As this handy li'l Raiders digest amply illustrates, the band's tri-cornered, tri-colored Revolutionary War uniforms made even the Beached Boys' Sixties stagewear seem hep by comparison. But you just name me one other all-American singer back then who could work his mojo flat out like Mark Lindsay could, ok?!

56. **Pedler, Jack "Jack Pedler"** It was only after two full decades spent manning the drum stool behind some of Canada's greatest recording figures that Jack stepped forward, picked up the nearest six-string, and started singing it *exactly* how it is. Not in any way for the faint of ear whatsoever, these are songs, and sagas, neck-deep in socio-political intrigue, yet each populated with a rich array of character studies seldom seen since the hey! days of Dickens (whose own records never did seem to ever catch on at all, now did they?)

57. **Pink Floyd "Ummagumma"** Of course you already have all your posthumous Barrett, and if you possess either "Dark Side" or even "The Wall" that's entirely *your* problem. In between these two disparate worlds sat this ½ live, ½ studio curio that somehow represents only the very best of both the Sydnon-Syd Pinkness ...back when the band had the majority of their facilities (and even sense of humor) still relatively intact, that is.

58. **Presley, Elvis "Sunrise"** The Alpha and the Omega of both the Rock *and* the Roll. Period.

59. **Public Image Ltd. "Metal Box"** Although the original Virgin metal from '79 has been digitally reduced to a mere "Plastic Box" today, the sweep of sordid sounds herein sound every ounce as gratingly Teutonic today as they did back in the wake of Johnny's initial rotten-ness.

60. **Puffy (Ami Yumi) "Fever Fever"** Take two wee Japanese television stars, add the big audio wizardry of a fresh-from-Jellyfish Andy Sturmer, commence to pillaging everyone's most cherished musical icons from Beatles to ABBA to Black Sabbath and the result is ...well, some may be expecting Pink Lady, but what I clearly hear is much more Shonen Knifery than mere J-pop Britney.

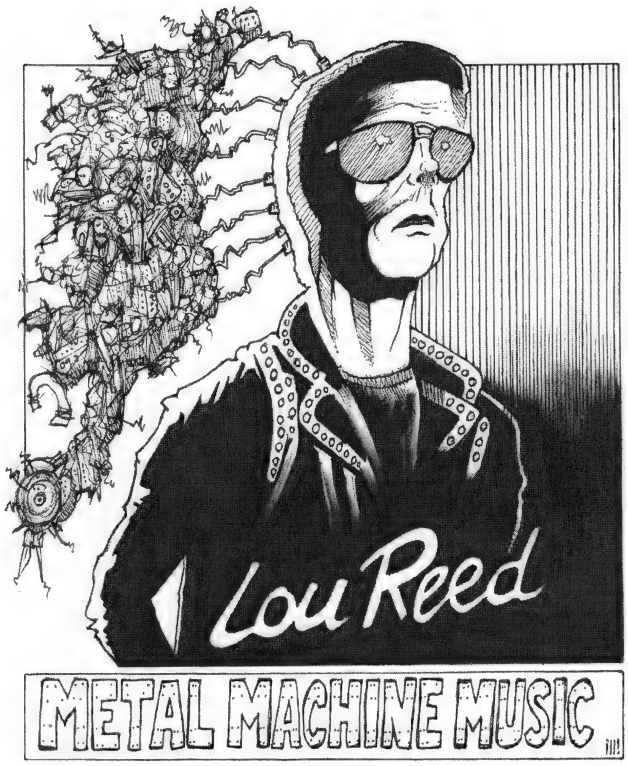
61. **Ra, Sun "Life Is Splendid"** Sun Ra and his Solar Myth Arkestra captured far more than live at the Ann Arbor Blues and Jazz Festival, September 8, 1972 = *real* Raw Power!

62. **Ramones "Pleasant Dreams"** For one brief, shining three-quarters of an hour in 1981, Joey, Johnny, Dee Dee and even Marky rode that much-needed bridge between the "gabba" and the "hey" with this, the closest duh brudders ever did get to building a pure pop-rock paragon.

63. **Rank and File "Long Gone Dead"** Dwight Yoakam was one of their first followers, Johnny Cash actually covered one of their first songs, yet this trailblazing combo of ex-Dils never did rise out of their cow-punking ultra-cult status for some increasingly frustrating, totally inexplicable reason.

64. **Rattles "The 60's Anthology: Smash! Boom! Bang! Beat in Germany"** Here's what proudly became of at least four of the countless young rockers who witnessed the Beatles' Hamburg Star Club sets and then expertly replicated that momentous, magic mach-shauing note by note and beat by Preludin-fueled beat.

65. **Reed, Lou "Metal Machine Music"** Of course it's impossible to blast each of the four tracks herein simultaneously, as you could so easily back when they first appeared each on their own vinyl side. But even when taken individually, one-by-one in your CD tray, ol' Red Eyes has never ever sounded as thoughtful ...not to mention relevant.



(Illustration by Michael Twohig)

66. **Richards, Keith "Talk Is Cheap"** It only took eleven songs and forty-seven minutes to decisively prove, once and for all, who the *real* Rolling Stone certainly has been all along, right?

67. **Riley, Terry "Terry Riley"** So THIS is why Pete called that song "Baba O'Riley" !!

68. **"Riot on Sunset Strip" soundtrack** The Chocolate Watchband's Vox-powered faux-Jaggery all but steal the show (to say nothing of the score!) of this 1967 cinematic milestone from American International, which also features the fresh-from-The-Munsters Standells and a Levi-packed performance from none other than Mickey Rooney the Junior.

69. **Runaways "Live In Japan"** Need anyone say any more??!

70. **Searchers "The Greatest Hits"** Eighteen shimmering demonstrations of exactly why, and how, that pigeon-hole lovingly referred to as Folk Rock actually took root at the Iron Door Club in Liverpool long, *long* before "Roger" McGuinn ever donned his Ben Franklin specs and trade-marked Rick 12-string.

71. **Shadows "At Abbey Road"** Yes indeed, *that* Abbey Road ...but Hank Marvin and band were churning hits that were literally too cool for words out of Studio Two back when them Beatles were still playing for jam butties in their first drummist's basement.

72. **Shaggs "Philosophy of the World"** These three strangely-rocking sisters from Fremont, New Hampshire made a record for their father in 1969 which immediately claimed no less than the late Lester Bangs, the dearly departed Frank Zappa, and the equally-dead Kurt Cobain as fans-for-life. And despite the fact that Tom Cruise suddenly wants to make a movie out of it all, this music stands as toweringly invincible today as it ever did.

73. **Shannon, Del "25 All-Time Greatest Hits"**Just as its title boasts, here's two-dozen-plus so-convincing arguments that fly squarely in the face of any and all who still somehow insist "nothing happened between Elvis and the Beatles": Yes, *here* are the songs that kept the masses glued to their six-transistors beneath the bedsheets whilst inspiring a multitude of songwriters to aspire to something loftier than the local American Bandstand.

74. **Shear, Jules "Demo-ltis"** He wrote the Bangles' all-time best song, developed the entire "Unplugged" genre for an ingrateful MTV, and has long been releasing albums full of demos the likes of which such pretenders to the home-recording throne as Jack White should only give a mountain of Portastudios just to sneak a brief listen to.

75. **Simply Saucer "Cyborgs Revisited"** Like the above-mentioned Modern Lovers, Canada's Simply Saucer began life in the early Seventies creating high art in a cultural vacuum ...yet quite unlike Jonathan Richman, Saucer mastermind Edgar Breau's cult status remains confined primarily to his Hamilton, Ontario home turf. The music he and his band fill this disc with demands your undivided attention nonetheless, in the name of musical history if nothing else.

(illustration: Robert Dayton)

76. **Sinatra, Frank "A Man And His Music"**In a not untypical diva-like move, The Chairman got bored in the mid-Sixties and decided to script, produce, and even *narrate* his own career retrospective-to-date (for his very own record company). However, the result was, and is, as pleasant an audio documentary as you or I could ever hear ..."Monkees Headquarters Sessions" ALMOST included.

77. **Sky, Patrick "Songs That Made AMERICA Famous"** All but unreleasable upon completion in 1973, and every single bit as deeply politically and socially incorrect today, one need only glance at a title or two ("Ramblin' Hunchback," "Bake Dat Chicken Pie," "Vatican Caskets") to realize these here are songs so *in*famous that only the bravest and thickest-skinned of listeners need apply themselves. But understand also that it's a task more than worth the concerted effort.

78. **Sly and the Family Stone "Stand!"**While others just as well meaning may point you towards "There's A Riot Goin' On" (or, niftier still, various collections of Sly's pre-fame San Fran Soul productions), I'll just have to stick with this 1969 pot-boiler and its centerpiece "Don't Call Me Nigger, Whitey" ...yes, all six minutes of it!

79. **Smothers Brothers "Sibling Rivalry"**They brought subversively absurdist comedy smack dab into living rooms years before SNL ever did, yet Tommy and Dickie were, and remain, skilled musicians first and foremost ...and there's eighteen full reasons right here why, among other things, Mom always seemed to like the snarky one best.

80. **Spector, Phil "Back to Mono (1958-1969)"** Three discs, sixty songs, a great big book inside a great big box including lotsa gorgeous Ronettes pix, a minimum of gunplay and, as if this wasn't much more than enough, there's even Phil Spector's Christmas album in here as well to help you erect your very own Walls of Sound every 12/ 25!

81. **Starr, Ringo "Beaucoups Of Blues"**I'll just say right here and right now that Ringo was one of the greatest drummers *ever* ...and that this here album is the kind of real Country I've yet to hear *any* of them much bally-hoo'd neo-traditionalists come anywhere CLOSE to.

82. **Steppenwolf "Monster"**It surely doesn't have to be repeated how the (gulp) Concept Album pretty well killed p-o-p as we once knew and loved it. But if one *must* subject oneself to twenty-minute songs railing against government, society, and/or organized religion, please let it be only John Kay and Co. who do the dirty honors, as they do so extremely well herein ...for God's (not to mention Tommy's) sake.

83. **Teenage Head "Endless Party"** Canada's very own Ramones never did it quite so well as they did on this Labbatts-soaked 1984 concert platter, which sports as a Bonus Track the one, the only "Top Down": the biggest should'a-been-a-great-big-hit cartoon car tune this side of Jan Berry's immortal "Schlock Rod."

84. **"They Came From Outer Space"** The Ran-Dells' immortal 1963 "Martian Hop" is reason enough to covet this other-worldly compilation ...but then there's also "Flying Saucer Rock and Roll," "The Purple People Eater," "The (*original*, by the way) Blob" and even Billy Mumy's "Ballad of William Robinson" just to ensure you remain forever lost in your own space.

85. **Thunderclap Newman "Hollywood Dream"**You may already know and even love this loopy trio's classic "Something In The Air," but did you know that this album is chockfull of numbers every single bit that one chart-topper's equal and *more* (...or that producer Pete Townshend played bass throughout under the daring alias "Bijou Drains")?

86. **Tiny Tim "Rock"**Nary a tulip is to be tip-toed anywhere on this understandably-rare (and apparently AC/DC -sanctioned) collection of Mr. Tim attacking such unwieldy behemoths as "Rebel Yell" ...which is duly pummeled into submission after a completely ear-dropping twenty-three-minutes-twenty-eight, I'll have you know!

87. **Troggs "Live at Max's Kansas City"**The *second*-greatest Trogg Tape in existence features R. Presley and the boys' sturdy late-Seventies "old wave" line-up effortlessly mauling "Satisfaction" and "No Particular Place To Go" (no "Good Vibrations" this time however, most unfortunately) alongside, you bet, the hit that launched a million air-ocarinists.

88. **Turtles "Battle of the Bands"** What happens when you give not only the once-and-future Flo and Eddie, but their entire band a great big budget (hot off of a couple'a hit singles) and then leave them alone to write and record their much-anticipated follow-up album is only *hinted* at on this, yes, Concept Album to kill ALL Concept Albums.

(illustration: Robert Dayton)

89. **Twilley, Dwight "Sincerely"** It was hard to find this beaut even when it was first released in 1976, but everyone lucky enough to hear and own it then realized – and so rightly it turns out – that Dwight and right-hand man Phil Seymour really were making powerful pop for the

ages, as this entire endeavor sounds every bit as air-freshening now as it did then.

(Illustration: Robert Dayton)

90. **Utopia "Deface The Music"**Roll over Big Todd, and tell Ron Nasty the news!

91. **Vincent, Gene "Bluejean Bop!"**This first full long-playing slab of rock 'n' roll ever to make its way into, then out of, the Capitol Records tower intact sounds every single bit as gamey, greasy and gin-soaked now as it must've back in the year of its blessed creation, 1956 A.D.

92. **Who "The Who Sell Out"**Who (sorry) would've ever in a million years imagined that any album sleeve that pictured Roger Daltrey sitting, and freezing, inside a gigantic tub of Heinz beans could be so thoroughly up-staged by the mere music it held inside its cover?

93. **Wiedlin, Jane "Jane Wiedlin"** Like some lovingly lemon-colored aberration dropped onto the fairway green, the coolest (not to mention most melodic) Go-Go most confidently launched her non-Belinda career atop current Beach Boy Randell Kirsch's exquisite "Blue Kiss," only to be followed by ten other charmers on this indisputable must-hear.

94. **Williams, Hank "Live at the Grand Old Opry"** (see Number 69)

95. **Wilson, Brian "Sweet Insanity"**So where ELSE can one hear Dylan duetting alongside our fave rave Beach Boy?!!

96. **Winter, Johnny "Second Winter"**The world's first – and probably *only* – three-sided vinyl record still sounds damn good on CD I must report, with the Great White Wonder absolutely pot-holing "Highway 61 Revisited" whilst twice taking even Little Richard to task in the process.

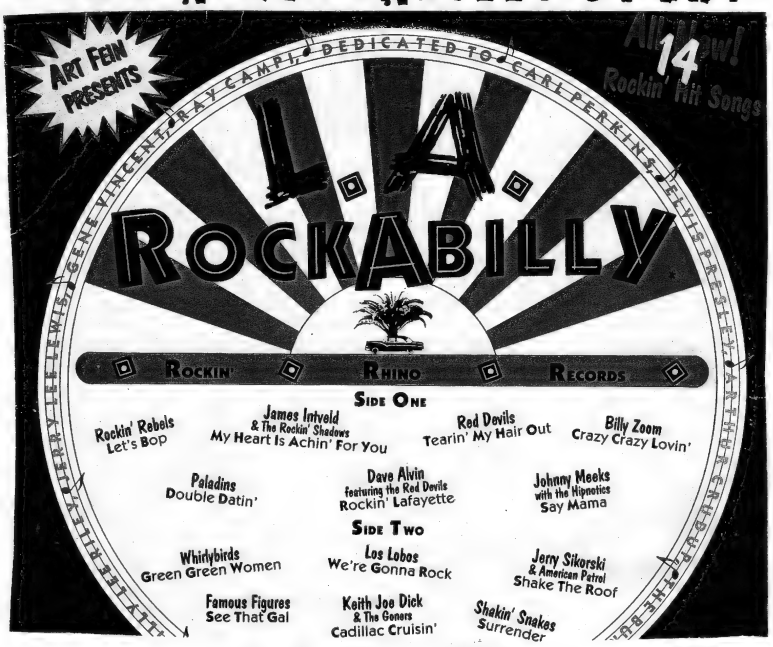
97. **Wray, Link "Link Wray"**The man, the myth, the "Rumble" took to his three-track chicken-shack studio sometime circa Woodstock and came straight out with no less than a template for all of the so-called rooty-rock that was soon to follow.

98. **XTC "Fossil Fuel: The XTC Singles 1977-1992"** A good time before Colin Moulding and especially Andy Partridge started becoming quite too clever for their orange and lemon jumpers, there lived a twee little British combo called XTC who played the Pop game as few ever have before or since. Consequently, the thirty-one tracks herein clearly chart a defiant nose-thumbing against the ever-encroaching dumb-down of the (music) world in general ...and you can even dance to it if you'd like!

99. **Yanovsky, Zalman "Alive and Well in Argentina"**The late, greatly lamented Lovin' Spoonful lead guitar man [see ROCTOBER 35] spent *his* Summer of Love concocting this wholly South of the Equator collection of sounds and stylings which sits every single bit as deliciously bent today as it surely did back then.

100. **Young, Neil "Journey Through The Past"** The last word, as it usually does, goes to young Neil and this tres-Shakey soundtrack to an imaginary western which includes lotsa CSN and especially Buffalo Springfield goodies, then somehow manages to end it all quite regally with an actual track on loan from no less than "Pet Sounds."

THE L.A. ROCKABILLY STORY



by Art Fein, 2007

In 1983 Rhino put out an album I compiled, *L.A. Rockabilly.* I think it sold 1500 copies. Then one day around 1988 it was gone, dropped from the Rhino catalogue. And there was no Volume 2. (There *IS* one, issued in this century, which borrowed the name, but I had nothing to do with it.) It made quite a big splash in small circles back then - and that is when I should have written this story! Twenty-four years doesn't sharpen the memory.

Kathe Schreyer, then my gf, now my friend, was the art director. I asked her to base the cover on the Sun logo, and she did a fine job. She also gave me a 'boost' by officially titling it "Art Fein Presents L.A. Rockabilly," which ensured me immortality and also meant nobody could find it in the Schwan guide.

Now back to the start - way back. I first heard rockabilly in 1957. It was mixed up with everything on the radio, and didn't stand out to me til it was explained in 1972. Then I met Rockin Ronny Weiser, and he asked if I was a rockabilly fan. I'd not heard the term (though the term was around in the 50s, it gained no traction) and I didn't understand it any better after Ronny told me it included Little Richard, but it was a rallying cry for we malcontents disgusted with the sounds of the 70s. (And the 60s.) His Rollin' Rock label kept the fires burning for real rock & roll, and our gang went and cheered every appearance by Jerry Lee, Elvis, Dorsey Burnette -- anyone now- or ever-connected with the good days.

In 1980 I met the Blasters at Ronny's house. This band was substantial. I became involved with them as quasi-manager (they were unmanageable), which caused a rift between me and Ronny when they left for Slash. I was at every recording session for the 1983 Slash album, usually from 6 pm to 6 am. I was the sober awake one.

In 1983 the Stray Cats were happening and I noticed with excitement that rockabilly bands were streaming out of England. (Their records were: they stayed there.) In 1979 I'd gone to Caister-On-Sea for the first ever Rock & Roll festival (in Blighty, "Rock & Roll" means the real stuff) but there were no young bands but the Jets, elstwise it was old hard-line piratic bands like Crazy Cavan & The Rhythm Rockers and Freddy Fingers Lee. But from the presence and look (ducktail haircuts, Gene Vincent tattoos) of the teenagers in the audience, a change in "our" direction seemed definitely afoot. I suggested to my friend Richard Foos who co-owned Rhino, that they put out an L.A. rockabilly album and he said OK. (Though it was well received worldwide, it didn't make much of dent on the label's rank & file: it's never touted in company look-backs.)

I was already in my first year of spinning records and booking bands Wensday nights at the new Club Lingerie in Hollywood (formerly the Red Velvet, site of one teen show by Eddie Cochran and many by the Righteous Bros-like house band the Knickerbockers) so it was no sweat getting acts for the record - the bands came to me. Hollywood and environs had its big share of that emerging scene, but Orange County to the south was really its epicenter. The frankly-shocking sight of guys with flat-tops wearing checker cowboy shirts and heavy Levis with one-foot cuffs and girls with gingham dresses and poodle skirts was easily explained -- those kids dug into their parents' old clothes trunk. Orange County in the 50s was the home of many southern, western and mid-western Okies (using the term loosely) who worked in agriculture and played country and rockabilly at night.

And don't let's forget L.A.'s early embrace of rock-country. 1950s TV shows from L.A. featured electric guitars and drum accompaniment at a time when Nashville forbade them. Southern Cal was the forefont of that new music's development. The generation immediately following it went with the Beatles, but in the late 70s the vacuous state of Rock caused this sleeping music style to reemerge not unlike Godzilla from years of slumber. Sadly, like Godzilla it burned to smithereens in its effort to topple the status woe, but ultimately was reestablished in the 90s as a genuine, or enduring, subculture. Now let's talk about the album!

"Let's Bop" - Rockin' Rebels. Always a rollicking great song at my shows, I chose it to lead off the album for its impact. "Let's Bop" really set the pace (and was used in a commercial). All the Rockin' Rebels came from long-lined Orange County families.

"My Heart Is Achin' For You" - James Intveld. James appeared often on my Wens night shows at Club L, and developed quite a following, which continues today. This was recorded in an old tube-mike studio in Hollywood formerly used by Lawrence Welk. James' younger brother Ricky, who was named after Ricky Nelson and died in the 1985 Nelson plane crash, was the drummer. In the 50s their parents immigrated to L.A. - Compton, then home of *Town Hall Party* - from Dutch East Indies.

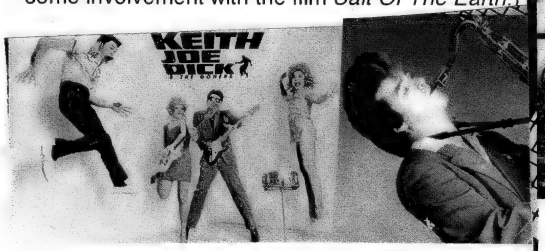
"Tearin' My Hair Out" - The Red Devils. "What ever happened to Emmy Lee?" is a question I often get. Answer: nothing much. The Red Devils, from Orange County, evolved into a power trio with Emmy and her husband Dave, they disbanded, she quit the music biz (and Dave). Bassist Johnny Bartel is in the Knitters, and other bands. Drummer Scott later joined the Paladins. Different people, including Blaster drummer Bill Bateman, kept the Red Devils name going into the 90s; they were courted and signed by Rick Rubin.

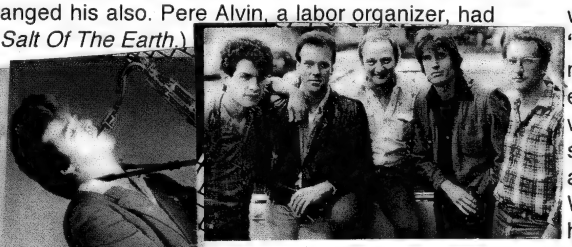
"Crazy Crazy Lovin" - Billy Zoom. From one of the Quad Cities (IA/IL), I knew Billy (under his previous name, Ty Kendall, which was not real either) at Rollin' Rock in Ray Campi's Rockabilly Rebels. This was a cut he'd already done, and a fine one. Subsequently he was/is in X. (His close friend Pat Woodward, bassist on this cut, died with Ricky Intveld in the Nelson plane crash.) Recently he became a father for the first time.

"Double Datin'"- The Paladins. A great, great group, still playing. Bassist Thom Yearsley, still with the band, married blues-rocker Candye Kane. Their wedding reception was at the house of ex-Rollin' Rocker Jimmy Lee Maslon. (Come to think of it, so was mine.) The version of "Double Datin'" I supplied, later, to the movie *Roadhouse 66* was the wrong take!

Dave Alvin - "Rockin' Lafayette". Recorded at Quad Teck where the first Blasters Slash album was cut. Engineer Pat Burnette is the son of Dorsey.

(A Chicago - Gary? - relative adopted the name Alvin in the 40s, and the Alvins' father, Casimir Czechewski, changed his also. Pere Alvin, a labor organizer, had some involvement with the film *Salt Of The Earth*.)





Spyder Mittelman (with American Patrol) Denver Spyder plays sax and

Johnny Meeks (with the Hipnotics): Johnny Meeks was a member of the Blue Caps when Gene Vincent recorded his tune, "Say Mama." Johnny wrote it with this Eddie Cochran-type arrangement in mind, but didn't record it himself until 1982.(V, lg) Johnny

"Say Mama" - Johnny Meeks & The Hipnotics. This was Johnny's first recording of the song he wrote. I leased it to a UK label, and the $50 I sent him was, he said, "the first money I ever got from a record." Johnny was in L.A. for a long time, but returned to West Virginia in the late 80s. Drummer Jerry Angel is now in the Blasters. Guitarist Tony Gilkyson was in X, and plays with Randy Weeks, Mike Stinson, Chuck E. Weiss and others and toured the UK as a solo in 2006.

"Green Green Women" - Whirlybirds. Dino Lee Bird is quite a character, 6-feet-plenty and excessively outgoing. He worked the rockabilly thing for a few years, then went to Austin where first he did a toga show based on Caligula and then found his niche as Mr. Wonderful, a Sinatra-type ballad singer who is, well, wonderful.

"We're Gonna Rock" - Los Lobos. When I heard this at Club Lingerie in '83 I thought it was in Spanish, Cesar mumbled so much. Steve Berlin took a crack at producing this cut, and then, like The Man Who Came To Dinner, he stayed on. It was Lobos' first appearance on 12" vinyl. (They'd done a couple singles.) The Blasters helped propel them worldwide by bringing them from East L.A. into Hollywood to open shows for them. (The Blasters did the same for Dwight Yoakam.)

"Shake The Roof "- American Patrol. Jerry was a stage-2 Rockabilly Rebel, joining Ray Campi's band with Colin Winski in the mid 1970s. You can see his athletic playing in the film *Blue Suede Shoes* (UK) which was shot at that 1979 Caister show I attended, and in the seldom-seen - for good reason! - rockabilly porn film *Hot & Nasty Young Teenage Cruisers*. Pianist Eddie Baytos now fronts the Nervis Brothers, doing nouveau Zydeco, and bassist Ken Jacobs still works in bands. In 1995, Jerry, an old friend, stole my car.

"See That Gal" - Famous Figures. 'Valley Boys' formerly of Zilch ("Cool Cool Corduroy Culottes," "Jerk Teens Jerk") played Club L many times and did a session with "Teenage" Steve Douglas, of Duane Eddy/Spector fame. Rob Freeman is a photo archivist for L.A. City, Adam Dubov a computer whiz, and Greg Benson an auto parts manager in Hanford, California.

"Cadillac Cruisin'" - Keith Joe Dick & The Goners. From Elyria, Ohio, Keith was molto theatrical (a former mime), but his humor, ultimately, fell on deaf ears. (His subsequent country band was KJD & The Dickeroos, his Vegas band KJD and the Dickettes.) He sang great and had a role in *Ghoulies*, the *Goonies* knockoff, but he never caught on; another Hollywood casualty. He's the one who brought me Dino Lee Bird, another treetop-tall guy. Rod Taylor, who produced this cut, performed in the 1970s as Roderick Falconer.

"Surrender" - Shakin' Snakes. This was a last-minute entry, and due to bad communications features a photo that omits the lead singer and includes un-featured guitarist John Jorgenson, later a member of the Desert Rose Band and producer of Rose Maddox. Jeff Ross, whose first gig was backing Lefty Frizell in San Bernardino, also worked with Desert Rose, the Bellamy Brothers, Kelly Willis, Candye Kane and still works with bands.

"She's Got It" - Spyder Mittelman. Denver native Spyder, like Keith Joe Dick, was extremely talented and noticeable. He worked with American Patrol, was Katey Sagal's squeeze in her Group With No Name days, and was in fellow Denver native Chuck E. Weiss's band throughout the 80s and 90s until his wasteful death of an overdose in 2001. He was a terrific guy.

In 1985 I supplied music for the movie *Roadhouse 66*, and included the Paladins, Dave Edmunds and others. The film featured Willem Dafoe croaking (an actor, he did, in fact, sing as good as Marlon Brando) the Blasters' "Marie Marie" (Ricky Intveld is on drums). I'd given "Marie Marie" to Shakin' Stevens in 1979 when he visited my apartment in Hollywood.

When Rhino offered a 12% royalty rate on the "L.A. Rockabilly" album, I configured it so each band would receive nearly 1%, then Foos pointed out to me that I'd not cut MYSELF in. (Most producers, he said, would take 6% and let the bands split the other 6%. Or 8/4.) He added another 2% for me, but it might as well've been 50%, as it never got to earnings. Early in this century a radio pseudo-physician in Seattle offered to reissue it through the Experience Project but disappeared, perhaps after finding that fourteen different contracts had to be written. (Oops, fifteen. I forgot myself again.) Bootlegging of the album on CD is not uncommon, and on those I make as much as I did on the original.

In 1993 I held an "L.A. Rockabilly 10 Year Anniversary" show at Club Lingerie, and about half the bands showed up. It was a full house, one of the last at good ol' Club L. (Now shuttered.) Gary Leonard shot a group photo in 1983 when the album was released, with nearly every act on the album present. I have a copy, but it wouldn't reproduce in *Roctober*.

The Revealing Science of Religious Concept Albums,
or, Secular Pop Stars Gone Sacred

By Mike Faloon

There are those who blame the Beatles for ruining rock and roll. In general, I disagree. It's unfair to wag our fingers at the Fab Four, and *Sgt. Pepper's* in particular, for introducing unwelcome and unnecessarily big ideas and serious thought into what had been a hedonistic realm, kicking out the support poles on the circus tent of fun that had been rock and roll. But *Sgt. Pepper's* did legitimize 'rock as art' for a lot of people and with such thinking came the proliferation of the concept album.

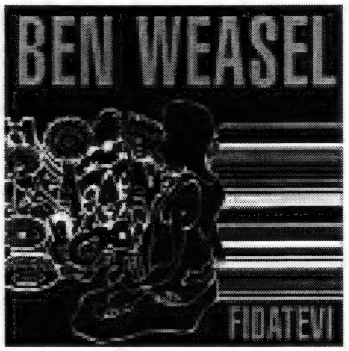
From blind pinball players (*Tommy*) to rock'n'roll outlaws persecuted by oppressive regimes (Styx's *Kilroy Was Here*) to whatever it is that happens on those goofy Dream Theater records, concept albums do not show bands at their best. Their very nature—methodically planned out tales wherein the songs all serve The Message—flies in the face of rock's allegedly spontaneous free spirit. Any band embarking upon a concept record has come to the conclusion that having a good beat is no longer enough. No more "Long Tall Sally," it was time for *Days of Future Passed.* Songs should teach. Or berate or scold. And if a band was going to climb up on a soapbox and get self righteous, why not bring religion into the mix? Why not let fans know that you are now a Jehovah's Witness? Or dabbling with numerology? Why not bring the word of God to the Devil's music? The answer, as history has shown us, is simple: because such experiments—splicing together rock music, storytelling, and spiritualism—yield terribly unpleasant results. Fortunately for those of us who enjoy musical oddities—those genetic mutants of the pop culture world—we can always count on a handful of recording artists to defy common sense.

Religious concept records, an overlooked branch of the concept album family tree, fall into two categories: "*Here's my reading list*" albums and "*Here's my faith*" albums. With a reading list record an artist is saying, My previous records were lacking, what I was doing before was morally vacant, bankrupt. This record, however, is a departure, it counts because I have been reading big books with big ideas and I am going to expand upon them via The Rock. With faith records an artist is saying, This record counts because now that I have the attention of an audience, I would like to inform them about my faith—my beliefs—via The Rock, maybe even convert a fan or two.

Reading List records

Yes – *Tales From Topographic Oceans* (Atlantic, 1973)Never known for their subtlety—this is a band that once considered naming themselves Life—Yes put considerable effort into distancing themselves from the world of conventional rock and roll. Though they started off with Simon & Garfunkel and Beatles covers (from 1969's *Yes*), it wasn't long before Yes was drifting through songs that took up entire album sides (1972's *Close to the Edge*) and releasing triple live albums (1973's *Yessongs*). What was a band committed to "the longer and weirder, the better" to do for an encore? The answer came to singer Jon Anderson while tour. Reading *The Autobiography of a Yogi* one night in Tokyo—what else is a rock star to do?—he found himself taken with a footnote referencing the obscure and apparently confusing Shastric scriptures. As the tour progressed through Australia and the U.S., Anderson and guitarist Steve Howe held candle lit brainstorming sessions in their hotel rooms. The result was one ginormous song, a "single composition," four movements spread across four sides of vinyl. The melodic touches the band brought to previous records were buried beneath an onslaught of lyrics that, to paraphrase Douglas Adams, floated through the air much in the way that bricks do. Here's a sample taken from "The Revealing Science of God": *Dawn of light between a silence and sold sources/Chased amid fusions of wonder in moments hardly seen forgotten/Coloured in pastures of chance dancing leaves cast spells of challenge/Amused but real in thought, we fled from the sea whole.*"

The story behind *Topographic Oceans* is much more engaging than the album but the record did lead to the most concise review ever, from the pages of *Melody Maker*: "No." Unfazed, Yes based their next record on *War and Peace*.



Ben Weasel – *Fidatevi* (Panic Button/Lookout, 2002)

From the time he sprang on to the punk scene in the late 80s, Ben Weasel made it very clear that he had a knack for antagonizing people. He had a number of outlets—fronting a pair of Ramones-inspired bands, Screeching Weasel and the Riverdales, and writing for numerous fanzines, most notably a long-running column in *Maxiumum Rocknroll*—and he made the most of them. Ben was worshipped in the pop punk underground and he cultivated a persona best summarized by the title of Screeching Weasel's 1994 album *How to Make Enemies and Irritate People*. By 2002, though, both of Ben's bands were out of commission and apparently he spent a lot of his down time reading. When he released his solo debut that year he stepped out of character with the unusually introspective *Fidatevi*, which translates to "trust oneself and others." (Album titles that require translation are always a sign of "take me seriously!" Weasel then went one better, printing *Fidatevi*'s lyrics in English and Italian.) Ben opened the record with "Patience," assuring listeners that not that much had changed musically: "*I have six guitars/I can barely play/And a questionable singing voice as well.*" Indeed most of *Fidatevi* was business as usual sonically. (The pleasant exception being cover of the Kinks' "Strangers.") Conceptually, *Fidatevi* is a whole lot of "You got your greeting card sentiments in my self-help book." Ben makes it clear that he is on a spiritual, though not religious, quest. As he said at the time of *Fidatevi*'s release, "The lyrics are based on…ideas I came across and personalized through the study of works of authors as diverse Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, Henry David Thoreau, Jon Kabat-Zinn, Pema Chodron, Ralph Waldo Emerson and others." I'm not sure that such a quest leads to answers but it certainly yields a lot of sayings. *Fidatevi* is saturated with lyrics that sound like the bumper stickers at a new age boutique. For example, "*If we're ever going to trust each other, well then, it's gonna have to start with someone*" ("Fidatevi") or "*I give thanks*" ("The Rays of the Sun") or the line that removes all doubt about whether or not this is a spiritual album: "*I learned about the cycle of live*" ("The True Heart of Love").

If all of that sounds enticing, then I suppose one could tag *Fidatevi* and its themes of "live right and in the now, because it won't last forever" as *Dead Poet's Society* with guitars. More likely *Fidatevi* is akin to Bill Murray's *The Razor's Edge*: of greater importance to its creator than its audience.

Cat Stevens – *Numbers* (A&M, 1975)

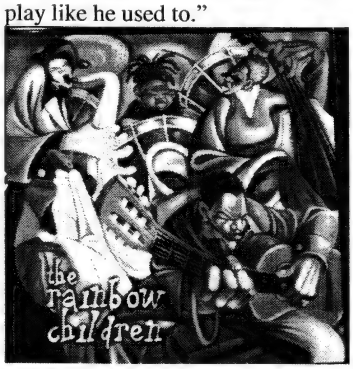
Cat Stevens wasn't too far into his 70s success when the pop star life started losing its appeal. Not satisfied with fame and fortune, Cat did a lot of spiritual dabbling. It was a journey that began with 1974's *Buddah and the Chocolate Box* and ended with his conversion to Islam a few years later. Along the way he released the oddest album of his career, *Numbers* (1975). Subtitled "A Pythagorean Theory Tale," *Numbers* may be based on numerology—the belief that everything can be predicted and measured in patterns or cycles, that numbers are the ultimate reality, blurring the line between the mathematical and the mystical. It's difficult to tell, though. The booklet that comes with the album opens with exposition that promises, at the very least, a bizarre trip, a tale about the planet of Polygor that "existed to give numbers to the universe." The story centers around

The Palace, which is occupied by nine characters until "one day things (when) went awry." Next we are introduced to The Palace 9 (my term, not Cat's) through a series of illustrations laid out like a children's picture book, each page devoted to a drawing of one of the characters along with text explaining said character. ("*Monad was the Emperor, bossy and bad tempered. He always talked loudly...Dupey was wise, quiet and loyal. He was so devoted that each night he washed Monad's feet.*") The story behind *Numbers* might have come into focus had those characters appeared in the album's lyrics. Yet aside from a couple of cameos, said characters are left out and the listener is left to their own devices. At best, the lyrics are opaque. Either Cat comprehends numerology and he's holding back on us or he is just as confused as the rest of us. I found reading about numerology a lot more enjoyable that listening to *Numbers*. It would seem that Cat did too because the songs on *Numbers* are labored, full of inoffensive but unmemorable 70s-style soft rock that lacks whatever joy Cat experienced reading up on Pythagoras. *Numbers* is the rare record that left me thinking, "I wish there had been more math."

My Faith records

The Conquistadors – *The Easter Story* (Act Four, 1967?)
Before releasing this intriguing record the Conquistadors were a moderately successful Motown-style act. Hailing from Chicago's west side, the group had two singles under their belt when, in 1967, they were asked to set the Easter story to music for a local TV show (*Lamp Unto My Feet*).
The outline was simple: a narrator would introduce each idea and then the band, joined by singer Jimmy Hudson and a girl group called the Carnations, would sing the song. They tried to put a hip twist on the tale (Narrator: "Jesus Christ comes to town to lead what could be called a demonstration.") and their ambition was admirable (they charge through eight songs, each with a spoken word intro, in just over 20 minutes). But the band must have been working with a tight deadline because the songwriting seems rushed, lacking the polish and hooks of their previous records. Still, *The Easter Story* is not without its charms, especially when the Carnations step into the spotlight. For example, one of them is cast as Judas and sings to herself/himself, "*I've got to put my buddy down.*" The Carnations close the side too, wondering what would happen "if angels had trouble moving the rock": "*I got me a hammer and I can use it well...But when I say move, better get out of my way...I'll step right on your toes and I'll punch you in the nose.*" Talk all you want about the Velvet Underground and any number of garage bands, no one topped the Carnations when it came to advancing the cause of a punk rock attitude in the late 60s.
The Easter Story didn't dent the national charts but band members claim that the record inspired the makers of *Jesus Christ Superstar*.
(Note: Side two is even better. It's not religious, hence the parenthetical note here, but it is fascinating. Like a West Side version of *Les Miserables*, it's a class conscious look at "community life." The best cut is "Please, Mr. Sam," a song about losing credit at the corner store. Again, the Carnations are front and center. They punch. They cut. Then they sing, "*Get up off that floor/'Cause we're gonna fight some more.*" In the heat of the moment the singer changes her mind, allowing slightly calmer heads to prevail. "*Don't get up off that floor/'Cause I'll jump on you some more.*")

Prince – *Rainbow Children* (NPG, 2001)
References to matters religious were nothing new for Prince when he released *Rainbow Children*. What was different, however, was that the Purple One had recently become a Jehovah's Witness.
The Rainbow Children were blessed "with the accurate understanding of God and His law." Not *an* accurate understanding, mind you, *the* accurate understanding. Maybe that is why they were chosen for the mission laid out on *Rainbow Children*: defeat the bad guys and get the girl. In this case, breaking The Haze by deconstructing The Digital Garden that The Banished Four built around The Palace. And wooing The Muse. Not surprisingly, the story gets fuzzy and that's why Prince, never one to leave a listener in the lurch, enlists a narrator, whose voice is very low and whose speech is very slow. (It sounds like he's using that voice-masking process they used to employ on shows like *60 Minutes* only played at 16 RPM). He does offer some clarity but he stomps across the landscape of this record like Godzilla, intruding on no less than eight songs. It takes eleven songs for the Rainbow Children to vanquish the Banished Four. They celebrate with a feast, which seems like a logical place to conclude the story. Prince opts instead to move onto a brief overview of African-American history, from the time of the early slave trade to Martin Luther King, Jr. It's a shame that Prince didn't go down this path sooner because these lyrics, though still innocuous, are much more interesting than the Rainbow Children/Banished Four conflict. Apparently these lyrics stirred up a bit of controversy, though Prince does nothing more than point out that Thomas Jefferson was a hypocrite. The real controversy surrounding *Rainbow Children* is the music. For the majority of the disc it sounds like Prince is trying to catch up to the sounds of other artists, aiming for the likes of James Brown and Stevie Wonder yet sinking to Sting-like jazz and Lionel Ritchie-caliber pop. Prince sums up the record in the last song when he has a character say "I just wish he'd play like he used to."



The Osmonds – *The Plan* (Kolob/MGM, 1973)
While hip Americans spent the early 70s smokin' dope and reading Mao, their parents were voting for Nixon and their kid brothers and sisters were buying Osmonds records by the truckload. Ogden's finest had nearly two dozen Top 40 singles and albums between 1971 and 1972 and a cartoon series across the pond in the UK.
Alan, Wayne, Merrill, Jay, and Donny never made their Mormon faith a secret, but prior to 1973 they were secular singers. That's when they released *The Plan*. Though the album was their first to fall short of the charts, it wasn't for lack of trying. *The Plan* is like a variety show, offering something for everyone stylistically. They crank up the Stevie Wonder-style boogie ("Mirror Mirror"). They rock out ("One Way Ticket to Anywhere," "The Last Days"—which has my favorite sequence on the album: a James Gang-like guitar riff. Then a pause followed by ...wait for it...a Barry White-like "Yeah." Riff again. Pause. "Mmm."). They dip their toes in psychedelic waters ("Movie Man"). Then they move to the middle of the road—songs on which you can actually hear those legendary Osmond pearly whites shining—for ballads such as "Darlin'" (*"Darlin' there's no end if I'm with you"*) and "Let Me Give My Love to You" (which sounds like a Spinal Tap song title yet when given the Osmond treatment comes across like chocolate and flowers and a boat ride in the park).
Lyrically *The Plan* is about searching for answers in this crazy world of ours and finding solace not in the fast lane of decadence and consumerism but in faith (the Osmonds and Cat Stevens would have gotten along well), opening with "War in Heaven" and closing with "Goin' Home." They are no direct references to Joseph Smith or Latter Day Saints or translating ancient Egyptian scrolls, but they did record at Kolob Studios, and release the album on Kolob Records, and publish the songs on Kolob Music hoping that the kids would be curious about the 10 Kolob mentions and then look up Kolob. (I know I did—Kolob is the star on which God resides, according to most Mormons. A few believe Kolob to be God himself.)
There is never any doubt about where *The Plan* is headed but no one had more fun singing about their religion than the Osmonds.

GENTLEMAN JOHN BATTLES TAKES HIS WHACKS AT

ZAKARY THAKS

In 1966 five kids in Corpus Christi, Texas lived the garage rock dream – they played dances, won a battle of the bands, opened for the Yardbirds, and recorded a single. Well, that's a bit of an understatement. They recorded *THE* single. "Bad Girl," a breakneck-paced, totally badass, Stones-y masterpiece, is one of the greatest garage rock songs of all time. Every time you play it the song makes you want to dance, fight, start a band, and play the record again and again. Though the single was picked up for national distribution and was regionally popular, the band broke up before the curtain closed on the sixties. However, after decades passed the magic returned when a reconstituted band hit the stage at the 2005 (pre-Katrina) Ponderosa Stomp in New Orleans. The audience, weaned on "Bad Girl," but not knowing what to expect, was shocked and awed b the mighty performance. Obviously there was a story to be told, and *Roctober* readers deserve to hear it, so we put our greatest Texas expatriate, *GENTLEMAN JOHN BATTLES*, on the case. And here's how it went down:

ROCTOBER: What actually transpired, over the course of writing and recording "Bad Girl," and, eventually, having it picked up by Mercury? That must have been heady stuff, you were, what, 15 or 16 years old?

CHRIS: Yeah, I was 15. Most of The Thaks were 16. We had written that song as just a group effort, literally. We wrote the music first, then I went home that night, and I fiddled around with the words, and got 'em solid the next night. The next time that we rehearsed, we ran it through, and, basically, that was it. As soon as we had that song in place, Carl Becker, who co-owned J-Beck Records, rushed us down to The Valley, that was really the only studio that he really knew about at that time. It was a little two-tracker, very bare bones, and we played everything at the same time. Make a mistake, you'd start over. So, "Bad Girl," we got that on the second or third take, we were lucky. Of all the songs we recorded, "Bad Girl" was the most accurate picture of who The Thaks were as a group at that stage. Lot of energy, lot of, just, "BAM!," driven, of course, by our drummer. He was the impetus behind our sound, as far as our strength goes. You don't appreciate the value of a good drummer until you play with ones that don't play like that. "Okay, NOW I see what the big difference is!" Mercury, they picked it up a couple of months after it had been out on J- Beck *(J-Beck went on to release records other Corpus Christi faves, The Bad Seeds and The Liberty Bell, whom Gerniotis did a stint with, and even some highly covetous, reputedly Garage-Rockin', early Tony Joe White sides - JB).* I'm not sure what the reasons are, why it was not promoted, or, maybe they put it out in a few markets to test it, and maybe it didn't test out up to snuff...at some point, we were looking like we were going to be taking off, because they had even run an ad in Billboard. They could have had some honest intentions, or, it may have been possible that our management was being too small town-ish. Carl Becker was known for asking for a lot, wanting this and demanding that, and maybe he made demands that Mercury didn't feel they were supposed to fulfill. Regardless, the Mercury thing just kind of faded away. We never really gave it that much thought...

Do you know if it got any airplay, outside of your area, when it was on Mercury?

I really don't know. We were all still in High School, and not really plugged into the networks. When you're a teenage kid, you don't really concern yourself too terribly much with what markets your single's getting play on. It was great to be in The Top Ten on your local radio, and, gee, a lot of perks come from that. Carl Becker would probably know exactly what happened with the Mercury deal, but, then again, Carl has very selective memory cells! He tends to make embellishments that are probably not quite right, and find a way to make 'em sound a little bit better, so, who knows?

What's interesting is, you saw all these changes take place in the Corpus Christi music scene. In just two years time, things changed drastically.

Yeah, from early '66 to late '68...

It was all good music, but, things changed a lot in time that you went from The Zakary Thaks to The Liberty Bell (and back), and, then, there was The Bad Seeds, who kind of morphed into The Bubble Puppy.

Right! Boy, The Bad Seeds were the big dogs in Corpus for a while. They just kind of ran out of gas, or something. You never know the lifespan of a particular group. There were some personality conflicts between the members of that group. I can tell you that, for a fact. That was probably the reason why they split.

Did you have a pretty good relationship with the other guys in the band?

Oh, yeah, sure. It wasn't perfect, but it was certainly tight and close knit while we were the original Zakary Thaks. Basically, we were hanging out together when we weren't in school. We practiced daily, we were fortunate enough that the drummer's parents allowed us to practice up in a room in the corner of the house, so we were really in our own world. We were big practice freaks, and that probably explains why we were as good as we were, for just being kids.

Right, and it seems like you really had the hunger, and really wanted to do this, and give it your best shot, and you had that bond that friends in High School have, and I don't know how in touch you guys were, prior to your first reunion gig, but, it seems like you still have that bond, today.

It's funny, because there had been long gaps. Pete had been living in California for 25, 30 years, so, you'd lose touch with people that way, before the Internet and whatnot. It seems to be, there's just enough of a background, a common bond, to where we can utilize that. Ideally, we should be practicing more than we do....

Well, don't feel too bad. One of the guys in Kenny and The Kasuals told me they don't practice at all, and they sound great!

Well, when we first got back together, we realized we had to have a couple of official rehearsals, especially because we had a new drummer. That took a while, but, we were able to take on some pretty tasty cover songs. I'm the one that said, "We need to slip in some cover songs once in a while, because we've got 14 songs, a dozen, really, and all we can do with these things is just change up the order. You've got to give me something, once in a while, to keep it interesting for me, or else, I'm gonna get bored," but I have yet to *(become bored).* Once in a while, we'll slip in something like a 13th Floor Elevators song, or maybe a Yardbirds song, but, still, Rex and John, they want to do nothing but Thaks stuff, which, it has merit, but

I certainly appreciate the other stuff that was going on at that time, that was bigger than us. We were nothing, compared to The Yardbirds.

Everybody was influenced by The Yardbirds, though. It would stand to reason that you might do one of their tunes to beef up your set.

We were just getting pounded from every possible direction with influences from all of the English groups, as well as the American groups, and there's Soul, too, because we had to have that Soul factor. One of the staple songs in our set was "Mustang Sally." We took it all in, but, unfortunately, if we hadn't started morphing, and started changing, if we'd kind of remained a little more with what we did best, that would have helped us, but, we were very subject to the winds of change, whatever was popular at the time. Next thing you know, we were doing Jefferson Airplane stuff, Jimi Hendrix, which was great, great stuff, but, if we'd have stuck to the "Bad Girl" formula, and, to a lesser extent, "Face To Face," we probably would have got a bit more mileage.

Yeah, "Face To Face" is kind of a glimpse of things to come. John's guitar parts sound very Jeff Beck-influenced, very acidic, for want of a better word. The Elevators might have already broken by then, but it was a very different sound for the time.

I think that we recorded "Face To Face" a little less than two months after we had opened up for The Yardbirds, here in Corpus, so, we were all just completely blown away by not only Jeff Beck, but Jimmy Page. That could have been the last job the two of them played together, I don't know, but it was one of the last gigs Jeff Beck played with The Yardbirds. John was particularly sparked by Beck, that sound that he was getting was just amazing, so, I think that just inspired him to come up with that lick. If you dissect any song, you're gonna be able to trace it back to some previous thing. Basically, John kind of went, "WOW, man!" And, they WERE good. They were, just, incredibly good. That was the spark behind "Face To Face." By the time "Please" rolled around *(laughs),* we were already kind of thinking," Boy, where is THIS thing going?" We were actually playing better, live, at that time. The choices of original things to put out, though, were just getting worse and worse.

Yeah, it's not that "Please" is a bad song, it just seems like anybody could have done it.

Yeah, and "Mirror of Yesterday," I think, at that time, Carl had already left, and his partner, Jack Syers, the "J" in J-Beck *(J-Beck wasn't named after Jeff Beck, as it was somewhere falsely written, but, it's understandable that one might think so),* he brought in Laughton Klein, who was one of The Pozo-Seco Singers, they had that one big hit, "Time." It was him, Susan Taylor, and Don Williams, who later became a big Country star. It was almost like a Peter, Paul and Mary thing. Jack brought in Laughton Klein to take over Carl's role. Of course, we do have Laughton to thank for that video that we have *(The Zakary Thaks did a color promotional film, all covers, all muthers. It's well known in the bootleg tape trade today, but has yet to see an official release).* That was all his thing. What he was going to do was take that film, and just pull up to the coast, toward Houston, and stop at these little Teen Clubs, and play the film for the club owners, and see if we could get bookings, but, that thing never really came to pass. Laughton was an ultra-conservative guy, which was the worst type of person to put in charge of us. We were, like, pushing at the edge of, just, radical... So, we were constantly combating every idea that he had, but we didn't realize that we should have continued with just saying "Yes" or "No" to the songs we were given. I remember us saying, "Oh, yeah, we'll do "Mirror," yeah, that's fine. Strings and horns, that'd be cool", and not really realizing what was going on. That song was pretty flat in terms of sales, from what I remember. They were lucky to have sold maybe a hundred 45s of that one, 'cause it was just not us.

Right. I thought "Green Crystal Ties" was a really good Psychedelic song.

That was after they had broken into the trio. That was Stan, John, and Rex. They decided they were going to do a "Power Trio" thing.

I don't think Texas has gotten it's due, as far as Psychedelia goes. It was really happening in Austin...

Austin was like Ground Zero. That was it, to us. Basically, the people that you thought of, in Psychedelia, was The Baby Cakes, and The Elevators, of course. We were lucky enough to have seen them. We had actually played with them four or five times, and we got to see them at their very, very best and their most bizarre, when they were loose, loose, LOOSE! Obviously, a little bit too much something that night. But, the first time that we saw them, they just knocked us over backwards! They were, just, SO totally different, I mean, it's just amazing. It's hard to imagine a group having that kind of effect, but, they certainly pushed us to where, by the next week, we had learned three of their songs, and we were playing the hell out of them. Texas is a really underestimated source for Sixties talent. Of course, as you know, we're a pretty big land mass. I was not aware that there were so many smaller circles around the country that had their own thing going on at the same time. It's kind of hard to think beyond the state borders of Texas, like the Kansas scene, the Chicago scene, and the Cleveland scene. The Elevators have got a pretty good notoriety thing going, now, but it seems like they haven't been awarded what they're deserving.

Right, and Roky even said this, himself, in his own, eloquent, way, that The Elevators were like a myth. In other words, that you had no proof that it actually happened unless you were there, and, pretty much, everyone I've talked to that actually saw them said the same kinds of things you're saying.

Sure, I can't think of another group that really had that kind of effect

on their audience. Every other one, you kind of walked away, fully conscious, but, with the Elevators, you walked away and said, " Did that really just happen?" It was weird, it was just totally weird, out of osmosis. They were just exuding this effect on vulnerable, younger people's minds. That's a pretty good thing, about him calling it a myth. In many, many ways, you could say that it was.

I think the thing about The Elevators is, they tapped into the idea that you could get people high without them actually taking drugs. You could, as you say, knock them flat on their backs, and maybe they could have been tripping, but, they didn't have to be, it wasn't necessary, and that, to me, is Psychedelia, right there.

Sure. I can guarantee you, at that point, I had not experimented much, so, that's just proof that it did work. Their concept did work to a certain extent. If you were altered, then you definitely fell under their spell. Someone told me, "Don't count on Roky to ever leave Austin, because he's not capable of doing that...," but, I'm glad he's proven them wrong. That's good to hear, that he's branching out.

It must have been very exciting to be involved with The Elevators in whatever capacity you were...

Yeah, well, to have been the opening act for three gigs...We were the only other group there, besides them. One show, we played in Austin at some larger venue, we played earlier, and they went on late at night. I don't think they paid that much mind to us. They checked us out briefly, but, they were definitely the object of all the attention.

When you played at The Ponderosa Stomp, it was really cool that you worked out " (I've Got) Levitation," as well as "You're Gonna Miss Me," that was a real pleasant surprise. The other Garage bands, as good as they were, pretty much stuck to doing "Gloria" and Stones songs.

That's a knee-jerk thing. If you're going to pick a cover, it had better be something you don't hear every day. There's a huge variety of stuff to choose from, like, The Yardbirds have a lot of songs that people don't realize they had, like "I Ain't Got You" and "I'm Not Talkin'," kinda Blues-based songs, but, Yardbirdish, very good, very tasty stuff. Some of the lesser known Animals stuff, you can throw in something like that, it sure beats the Hell out of "Jumpin' Jack Flash" (laughs). Did you happen to catch The Bad Roads, then, at The Ponderosa?

Yes, and, to be honest with you, I thought they were real tight, they played real well, but, something was missing....

That's kind of the same feeling that I got. I thought Buzz, the lead singer, was trying just a little too much.

Yeah, I agree with that...

His pitch was good, but, that was kind of the general impression that I got, that he was overzealous, when we played with them at South By Southwest. It was tight, but, it was kind of predictable.

They were doing some really obvious cover songs...

(sings) "Time won't let meeeee...."

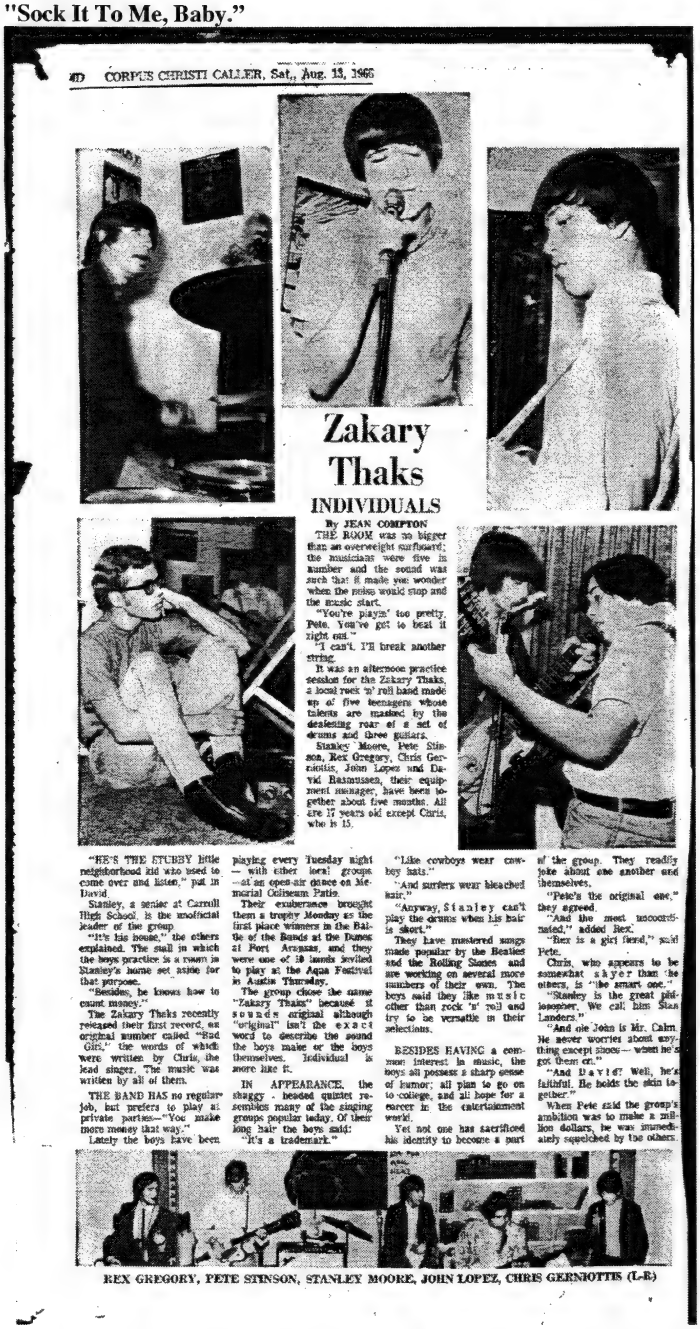
Right, thank you. They played really well, and he sang really well, but, the difference, too, when Kenny and The Kasuals played, they, pretty much did a set of all covers *(except the Psych-Punk classic, "Journey To Tyme," which Dr. Ira had them play twice. The Hell of it is, the second version was the better of the two!-JB)*. They did do, "I'm Not Talkin'," and pretty much all of their fake "live" LP, the "Impact" album, which is a huge collector's item, now. It's all covers, but, it's a really good collection. The songs did sound good live, when they played 'em.

Sure.

I would have liked to have heard more of their original singles, which are, no doubt, lesser known today than the "Impact" album, but they were still right on the money. Still, when you guys did that promotional film, I'm sure that, in hindsight, you must have wished there were more originals on it, but, those covers still sound great.

Because of the actual reason why it was made, originals were not really an option. The guy wanted what was being heard over the radio at that time. There were some songs that we did on that film, to this day, that people always, kind of subconsciously, when they hear the song, think about us, briefly, like "Tell Her No" and the one that we always get requests for, now, what's that Mitch Ryder song?

"Sock It To Me, Baby."



CORPUS CHRISTI CALLER, Sat., Aug. 13, 1966

Zakary Thaks

INDIVIDUALS

By JEAN COMPTON

THE ROOM was no bigger than an overweight surfboard; the musicians were five in number and the sound was such that it made you wonder when the noise would stop and the music start.

"You're playin' too pretty, Pete. You've got to beat it right out."

"I can't. I'll break another string.

It was an afternoon practice session for the Zakary Thaks, a local rock 'n' roll band made up of five teenagers whose talents are masked by the deafening roar of a set of drums and three guitars.

Stanley Moore, Pete Stinson, Rex Gregory, Chris Gerniottis, John Lopez and David Rasmussen, their equipment manager, have been together about five months. All are 17 years old except Chris, who is 15.

"HE'S THE STUBBY little neighborhood kid who used to come over and listen," put in David.

Stanley, a senior at Carroll High School, is the unofficial leader of the group.

"It's his house," the others explained. The stall in which the boys practice is a room in Stanley's home set aside for that purpose.

"Besides, he knows how to count money."

The Zakary Thaks recently released their first record, an original number called "Bad Girl," the words of which were written by Chris, the lead singer. The music was written by all of them.

THE BAND HAS no regular job, but prefers to play at private parties—"You make more money that way."

Lately the boys have been playing every Tuesday night — with other local groups — at an open-air dance on Memorial Coliseum Patio.

Their exuberance brought them a trophy Monday as the first place winners in the Battle of the Bands at the Dunes at Fort Aransas, and they were one of 10 bands invited to play at the Aqua Festival in Austin Thursday.

The group chose the name "Zakary Thaks" because it sounds original although "original" isn't the exact word to describe the sound the boys make or the boys themselves. Individual is more like it.

IN APPEARANCE, the shaggy - headed quintet resembles many of the singing groups popular today. Of their long hair the boys said:

"It's a trademark."

"Like cowboys wear cowboy hats."

"And surfers wear bleached hair."

"Anyway, Stanley can't play the drums when his hair is short."

They have mustered songs made popular by the Beatles and the Rolling Stones and are working on several more numbers of their own. The boys said they like music other than rock 'n' roll and try to be versatile in their selections.

BESIDES HAVING a common interest in music, the boys all possess a sharp sense of humor; all plan to go on to college, and all hope for a career in the entertainment world.

Yet not one has sacrificed his identity to become a part of the group. They readily joke about one another and themselves.

"Pete's the original one," they agreed.

"And the most uncoordinated," added Rex.

"Rex is a girl fiend," said Pete.

Chris, who appears to be somewhat shyer than the others, is "the smart one."

"Stanley is the great philosopher. We call him Stan Landers."

"And one John is Mr. Calm. He never worries about anything except shoes — when he's got them on."

"And David? Well, he's faithful. He holds the skin together."

When Pete said the group's ambition was to make a million dollars, he was immediately squelched by the others.

REX GREGORY, PETE STINSON, STANLEY MOORE, JOHN LOPEZ, CHRIS GERNIOTTIS (L-R)

Huh? *(laughs)* Yeah! It's like, "WHAT? So, we worked up "Devil With a Blue Dress," and did that in Beerland (outdoor fest in Austin, centered around guess what?), and I picked up a medium rating. So, I dunno, maybe it's got to be "Sock It To Me, Baby " or nothing.

I think that's the one, off the video, that people like.

Really?

Yeah, cos I think that was already a pretty tuff sounding song when it came on the radio, but, I think, when you guys did it, you gave it an extra crunch. A lot of those covers sound heavier than the originals...I liked your version of "Mustang Sally," but, living in Chicago, I've heard that song way too many times! It's become a staple on at Bluesfest, and in Blues clubs, even though it's not a Blues song! There was one tune, I don't even know who it was by, it went, *(sings)* "You knoooow I love you, baby, yes I do."...

That was Jefferson Airplane,"3/5ths of a Mile in 10 Seconds"

Yeah! I don't really have any of their records, but I know that song. A band called The Pink Fairies did it, too.

Every time we played with someone of any stature, we'd pick up some of their stuff, like, "Oh, we've gotta some of this," and, we played a show with The Jefferson Airplane in San Antonio, and we picked up

on that. Stan, the drummer, he was the ears of the group...He could tell if it was going to be a good bit for us, so, that eliminated a lot of the picking up songs and playing them a time or two, and going, "Nah, that's not working." Very rarely did that happen, because he had the ear. Another one that we did in that film was "Love is a Beautiful Thing" by The Rascals. I thought we did a pretty good version of that.

I thought so, too.

"My Back Pages," so-so, it was not really us, because The Byrds were into a different thing. The one that never made it out on that thing, that I'm sure you have a 9th generation videotaped copy of, right?

Yeah, mine's not bad. I'm sure there's better copies out there, by now.

There's a much, much better one. We have the digital, straight from film, version, which we have never let out. So, that's just shocking! I mean, that's just like it was filmed last week. The one song that I wish you could have seen us better on, was, we did "Levitation," which was the first song on the film, originally, but, because we had a strobe light, it was a newfangled thing, and we didn't know how to work it right, so you're just seeing little flashes of light, and hearing the song, we played the crap out of that song. So, one of these days, I'm guessing, we're going to market that digital thing, because, I've seen some pretty nasty copies of it. I hear it's been making the record convention circles for years. I've seen people take a supposedly 2nd generation copy and try to transfer it to digital, and, it's a tedious process, but, I think the problem is, what it has to do with, is frames per second. Film is 24 and videotape is 30, and that little difference there is enough to make it look awful. I've seen 'em tweaked to the max, and, compared to digital, you don't even want to look at that other crap again.

What TV shows did you do, and what songs did you do, and did you ever get to play live on TV?

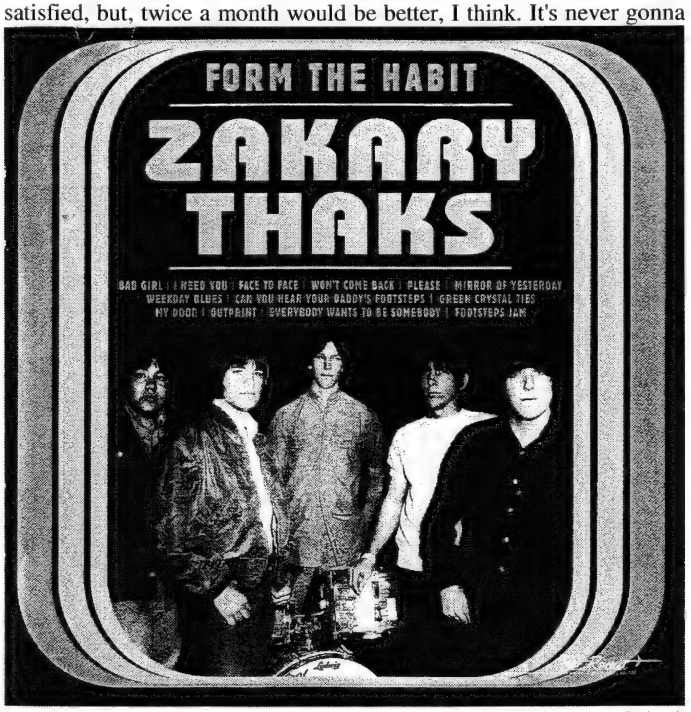
No, playing live was not the thing to do. I think we did it once, but we strictly just did our own stuff, and I could tell you the four shows that we did. In Corpus, there was a show called *Teen Time*, that's the one that The Bad Seeds' video that's going around came from. Then, in San Antonio, they had *Swing Time*. There was also a Saturday morning show in Austin, but, I cannot remember the name of the show, but I can remember the name of the host, his name was Mike Lucas, and, that one, we played only once or twice. Then, in Houston, *The Larry Kane Show*, which we only played once, and the groups that we appeared with were The Gentrys and The Five Americans. We would just go in there and lip-synch, and then, hopefully, draw in a few people to the gig that night. In Corpus Christi, The Carousel was the main teen club. It was a converted bowling alley, and that was the big place where all the people who were anybody came. Roy Head used to play there, Question Mark and The Mysterians, The Ventures, Ronny and The Daytonas, and it was a small venue, they were probably lucky to get three or four hundred people in there, but, that was a GOOD thing, you talk about intimate surroundings. If you could wiggle your way up to the front, you got about as close of a personal view of the group as you could ever want. San Antonio proper, I think the only club that was really sparking any kind of action was a place called Sam Kinzie's Teen Canteen. That was where all the local San Antonio groups strived to play. I guess that was San Antonio's answer to The Carousel club. Austin, there was not really too much going on as far as teen clubs. Obviously, it was a college town. Quite honestly, most of the out of town trips were to San Antonio or to Austin, and the reason why we went to Austin so much was because of the frat parties. They had ample funds to pay top dollar, which, at that time, was about $500 for a group that's fairly popular to come and play their beer bash. Of course, we were underage, but, we got rights to the beer pump, so, Some nights were tougher than others! Austin, being a college town, if they had any teen clubs, I was not aware of 'em, cause we got sucked into the frat circle, and that was basically it. I don't know what was going on in Houston. The valley, amazingly enough, did not have any teen clubs that I can think of, but, their big thing was, they would hold these weekly teen dances, and that was typically at The MacAllen Civic Center, or The Mission Civic Center. The Texas valley is peppered with little, tiny cities down there, none of them are really of any significant size, but, they all had their little hall, and, so, we were definitely popular down in the valley. I Remember going to The Mission, this was when we were at our height, I guess, and we didn't realize, we had not played down there in a while, ever since, I guess "Face To Face" had already charted out over there. This Civic Center was a pretty large building, and I remember us driving to the gig, and all of these cars are parked everywhere for a couple of miles, and I was just, "What the Hell is going ON?!," and The cars all backed up to see US, it turned out. That was just wild, and, I want to say, there was easily a thousand teens at that club, that night. We literally had to wiggle our way through the traffic jam to get to the back door and get in, walked out there and the place was packed, and they were hanging off the rafters, screaming. Corpus had a few other clubs not even worthy of mention, but, The Carousel, that was the cherry on top of the cake. They still stayed in business, the only other place that gave it a run for the money was The Stardust Ballroom, which was a converted skating rink. That actually held more people. That's where I saw The Elevators twice, and Eric Burdon and War, the early Z.Z. Top, post-Moving Sidewalks. That place didn't really put The Carousel out of business, but, it definitely put a dent in their profits. I don't know which went first, but, time marches on! Corpus Christi is not too appreciative of their history. If you were to ask the average Corpus Christian who The Zakary Thaks were, they'd go, "WHO? WHA..?!." Corpus is growing too quickly, I don't want to say "Cosmo," because it's not that fast-paced of a city, but, Corpus is going through some big growing pains right now. The other cities are the way to go for us, for The Zakary Thaks. We love Austin, we love New Orleans, but, that's really where we need be, not Corpus.

They're more music-conscious.

NOTHING going on in Corpus, except work, the beach, it is a big tourist trade town, but, that's pretty much it, as far as clubs go.

Are you trying to play more than you are, now, or are you playing about as much as you'd care to?

Well. I think we all want to play more frequently, but, there's not really a huge amount of festivals going on, on a regular basis. We're all doing different things, job-wise, and it's really hard to pull it all together. You could never go back in time, so, we take 'em as they come. If there's a three or four month gap between gigs, that's all right, we're not starving. We all have family obligations, mortgages to pay, you've gotta take care of business. But, certainly, I'm sure if you asked all of the other members, they'd express a desire to play a little bit more frequently. I could see us easily doing once a month and being satisfied, but, twice a month would be better, I think. It's never gonna



hit that level, it's a very unpredictable deal. As far as recording, I don't

think it's a realistic expectation on our parts to go back into a studio and crank out a hit, that's just not there. So for us, the side of the bread that has the most butter is live sets, specifically in places like Ponderosa Stomp. That's a custom fit for us, and, probably for most of these other people that have come out of the woodwork. You can go in and make a record that can actually get some play somewhere, but, it's a different world as far as radio goes. It's so video-oriented, now, that there's too many hurdles to really make that a dream, so, now, our dreams are lowered, and we're just happy to go on and play at these festivals and things. I'll bet we could do well in Europe. A European tour is a pretty good avenue for some groups, they know that if they can go over there and pursue it, they can actually turn out pretty popular, like The Cynics, I don't know if you know them...

Sure, I've been following them for about 20 years...

They supposedly have a huge following there, but, if they're getting burned, that seems to be the most common story from most groups that I've talked to, is you've got to watch everything that goes on in Europe, cause there's people there who sort of operate on a different set of principles. You're talking U.S. Dollars, you're talking Euros, next thing you know, you're promised this, but, you get that, and, the next thing you know, you're like The Uglybeats, we did a festival in Austin called "Beerland" with them, and they went to Spain for 10 days, and it wound up costing them about $1000 each! They're young enough kids that they enjoyed it, anyway. They got to see Spain, so, it was not a total loss, but that's not a big option for us. We're just old enough to be less than perfect travelers, and, sometimes, it's a major accomplishment for us to travel even to somewhere like Memphis and New Orleans and get back home in one piece, cause, you know, the body starts wearing down a little bit, requiring more R and R.

I know, but the fans in Europe are very appreciative of this stuff, and they do a lot of festivals, if there were some that you could get on...

Sure, that would be great. We're working on that, possibly, I don't know to what extent we'll be successful with that. If the offer is good enough, yeah, but, the voice of reason says, "Think about it, think about traveling." I don't know how long it takes to fly to, say, Great Britain, and then, there's the hassles of inspection...It would have to be a really good offer, then all of us would readily say, "Yeah, let's go ahead and do it." It's too early to start thinking about that, and, yet, we're not getting any younger. I've got to stay stateside, for now, because it's biting off too big of a piece...

But, did you think this would ever happen, here at home?

Oh, NO! If you'd have told me, two years ago, that I'd be doing this now, I'd go, "WHA?!." I'd gotten out of touch with everybody, particularly after Stan had done himself in *(Drummer, Stan Moore, committed suicide in the year 2000),* everybody got kind of fractionalized, "I'm not talking to him anymore." When this reunion thing came about, it was, like, "Okay, we can move on with our lives now," cause, that was a very odd deal, for Stan to have done what he did. Stan was the heart and soul of the group, everything was centered around him, so, for him to pull that made us feel a little odd. But, no one seems to be carrying too big of a burden about it, now that six years have passed, since he did that. We can still remember him, but, he just ran out of options, I guess. He was in a situation similar to Roky Erickson, but, unlike Roky, he didn't have medicine. It's such an ironic thing, because, he had money at one point in his life, in fact, for most of his life, he had money. He was a very privileged individual, but, people's priorities get kind of weird. He thought nothing about just spending a big load of money at one time, and worrying about the repercussions later. I think he kind of went on a spending spree and got himself in a corner. He never really held a job, he just played the drums, but he wasn't playing enough.

The thing is, you can't tell someone to get help, they have to figure that out for themselves. Roky figured it out, but it took a long time. However, once he decided that he wanted help, the change came almost overnight. But, when you lose a good friend like that, you're hit with all these conflicting emotions, but, eventually, in time, it all starts to make sense. You don't know why this happened, but, it did, and you have to move on with your life, cause that's what they would want you to do.

Sure, but that's just one of those deals. Fortunately, the four surviving members are here. There's some groups where you lose multiples, and that makes it tough. In fact, I think The Bad Roads' deal is that there's only two original members. I forget which members, besides Buzz, the singer, are from the original group. If you can make it through life, and then, be able to do this again, forty years after the fact, that's pretty cool, I think. We're certainly having more fun with it, this time around, than when we were kids, because it was serious stuff, then. It was a way of life, and you were making a statement that every teen needs to make. Now, we're not out to deliver our message, or whatever, we're just playing our music for music's sake, and hopefully do it as good, if not, sometimes, a little better, and, sometimes, a little worse. Nevertheless, we're here, live, in the flesh, doing it. That really makes it fun, and the part that really gets me is that we're now getting paid more per person than we used to get as a group, you know? It's just wild! That's the cherry on top of the cherry! There's nothing more tiring for a person who's been playing music for a long, long time, like forty years, let's say, to go and do a party or a gig where you do separate 45-minute sets, three in a row, I mean, you're wiped! You are absolutely wiped at the end of the night. But, now, you can put the pedal to the metal 110%, cause you know you're only going to have to be on stage 40 minutes. It makes it more enjoyable. It's hard to think of a negative aspect of 2006 Thaks' life, other than being older and not traveling as well. We seem to be having fun, at least, that's the feeling that I get, they could not be having fun, but, I don't think so....

When people look back on that era, it looks like it was a lot of fun, but it's a lot of work, too.

Sure it is. If we were all living in the same city, and were a little bit more focused on what was going on, we'd be a lot further down the road, probably, but, we're lucky to get in what we can, as far as practice sessions go. We've only been together about a year and a half, and we've done, maybe, six jobs, tops, but, they've all been good jobs, all in their own different way. There's actually a music scene going on in Corpus that I wasn't aware of, but, how much it parallels the scene in the sixties, I couldn't say.

Well, of course, in the sixties, it really was a youth market, and they HAD to make places like teen clubs available. Today, you've got some all ages venues, but not as you did in the sixties.

Yes, the teen clubs haven't gone away completely, but, for teens, the sixties were, like, the golden age. You had your pick, you went and had a good time, no booze being served, totally groovin' to the bands, all live music, no DJ up in the booth, spinnin' the wax, we were about ten years away from that crap. I don't know what's going on, now, with the Corpus clubs, but, I would imagine, not too terribly much, as far as Dance clubs. There's still, believe it or not, a segment in Corpus that likes the Country and Western crap, so, go figure.

But, not even knowing what Country music really is...

Right.

It's like when I've tried to explain to some people, that the mid-60s Garage Band music was called "punk" before the 70s Punk movement hit. In fact, some people say that "Bad Girl" was the first hardcore punk song, if you're familiar with that stuff, just because it had that frantic, galloping pace that never lets up. When you listen to records from that period, there's a few records like that, that really sound like a combustible engine, but, not a lot.

There's just a very small handful of songs that were able to fit into that group, and, fortunately, that's one of them. It was really hard to come up with a follow-up to that song, for sure. That was kind of a magical thing that just happened. Never could get another one quite like that, so, we have that one...

But, you had these other tunes that were different, but as good in their own way, like "Won't Come Back." That's another great punk song, different from "Bad Girl," but, it's got the riff, it's got the turnaround, and the refrain is like a second chorus in itself...it almost sounds like it could have been two song ideas put together as one. Was that the case?

Essentially, the original concept was something Pete came up with it, especially the introduction. He had just given us the basic pattern, and, somehow, Rex and I were handed the responsibility of doing the final shaping and forming of the song. I went over to Rex's house one night, and we just sat there in his room and worked out the rest of the song, with more defined patterns. I came up with the words while we were doing that, as well as kind of finalizing it the next day. It was packaged and ready to go. You never knew which way the song was gonna go. One of us would come up with an idea, then, Rex and I or John and I would run with it. After "Face To Face," that was when we started being a little more influenced by Mike Taylor, because, by that time, he had come on board as our road manager. He was a songwriter, as evidenced by the "Fabulous Michael" era. After Mike Taylor left The Bad Seeds, he was still under contract to J-Beck Records. Carl Becker wanted him to pursue a solo thing. It was billed as "The Fabulous Michael." The songs were very Mike Taylor-ish. They sounded like variations of "Mirror of Yesterday" and "Please" with him singing, but it never really got off the ground. They released a couple of singles locally, and they just tanked. Mike and Rex had teamed up on "Mirror of Yesterday" and "Can You Hear Your Daddy's Footsteps," and, then, we tried getting back, all for one and one for all, like when we had started, with "Bad Girl," but, by then, the music had changed, and we had changed with it. It wasn't quite the same, with songs like "Everybody Wants To Be Somebody." Again, I wasn't involved when they were doing "Green Crystal Ties" or "Life's Door," that was, I think, probably their "Acid Phase." That was the thing, you had a "Power Trio," and Stan certainly felt his part on the drums, and Rex and John were pretty much hitting their chops well at that time. Pete was in The Navy, and I was with The Liberty Bell.... Their singer had been drafted, so, they needed somebody, quick. It was more like a job than The Zakary Thaks. I was working for Carl Becker, but, this time, it was HIS band, he called the shots. The ill-fated Liberty Bell, they just can't seem to get any respect...We thought, for sure, that they were going to be given that lame star in the "Walk of Fame." Down here in Corpus Christi, they have an area, The Water Street Market Place. There's stars in the sidewalk. We thought, for sure, that they'd be nominated this year, and they WEREN'T! So, we went, "What the Hell?"

But, The Thaks are already there, right?

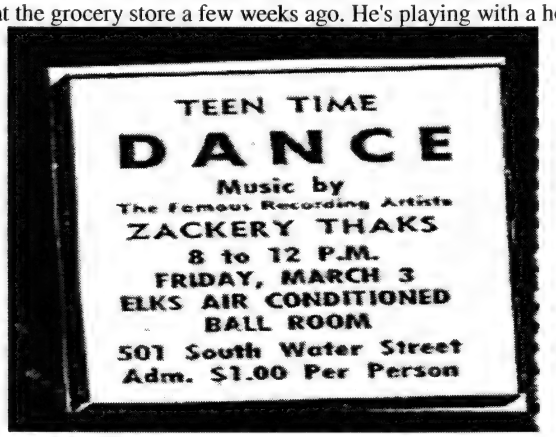
Yeah, we're there, but, Corpus is a real funny town. They're all talk and no action. They're, like, "Oh, yeah, we're gonna get you back down here to play at The Executive Surf Club, bla, bla..." Never happens, so, "Pinche" on it, but, I really thought this was going to be the year. The Liberty Bell's lead guitarist, Al Hunt, died last year, so, that would have been good, if they'd been inducted. He was 56, living up in Spokane, Washington, and, he experienced a heart attack and croaked. If you go to the Zakary Thaks' website, there's a tribute to Al Hunt, under the "Sherwood Forest Rat Pack " link, which includes a couple of songs that he did, and, man, if you hear his version of "Muleskinner Blues," it's just incredible. Technically, he had the most precise lead style of any of the big lead players in Corpus. He was more accurate than John Lopez, although John had more of a feel to his leads. The Liberty Bell kind of toyed with the idea of following up with what we did, having a reunion, playing a few gigs, but, not after this...

What do you remember about your experience with Andre Williams?

Not very much, I'm afraid. Don Robey from Peacock Records brought him in to write a song for The Liberty Bell. I remember he really liked me, for some reason. The song, "Naw, Naw, Naw," the group didn't have much to do with, I mean, they sent the masters to Chess Studios in Chicago, and they overdubbed these studio cats on guitar and stuff, give it more of a "Chicago Blues" feel. I never saw Andre again, after that. It's interesting to hear that he's out there, performing, again, I didn't know about that until you told me.

What was the story with Kubla Khan?

Kubla Khan was a band I was in for a while after Zakary Thaks broke up, but, we were trying to be like The Band and Traffic. We basically just practiced alot, we didn't play out much. That was the history of Kubla Khan, basically. I actually ran into the organ player from Kubla Khan at the grocery store a few weeks ago. He's playing with a horn



band, now. I LOVE horn bands, always loved working with 'em. He told me these are all young guys, and he's like the "Old Man" of the group, but, he loves it, he says, "Man, these guys KICK ASS!" In fact, of all the bands I've played with, the guys in Kubla Khan are all still doing well, and are still active in music. John Lopez, our guitarist, had hip replacement surgery recently, but, he's doing great. He's lost weight, and he's standing upright again. You know, John never stopped playing, either. He's always gigging. I remember, in 1973, when Bubble Puppy was on its last legs. I know they were called Demian for a while, and, then, what did they change their name to?

Sirius. That was a little later, like in the late 70s...

Yeah, but, John joined them for a little while, and went on the road with them. After that, he phoned me, and told me he was playing with this guy named Freddy Fender. He said this guy was really great, but, really, I'd never heard of him!

Before he had all the Country hits, a lot of people hadn't heard of him.

Exactly. So, John tells me to go to the hotel and ask for (very credible Spanish accent) "Baldemar HUERTA!" Man, he was great. John played Country for a LONG time after that. He's always in demand, so, he's never stopped playing. Now, The Bubble Puppy...They SHOULD be playing one of these festivals like The Ponderosa Stomp, but, they can't. Rod Prince had his hand severely injured in an industrial accident a few years ago, and he'll never be able to play guitar again. David Fore, the drummer, is the only one still really involved in music on a regular basis. In fact, his later band, D-Day, reformed recently, and are going to start performing again. *(D-Day was a Late 70s-early 80s Austin New Wave band. They're best remembered for their first single, "Too Young To Date," with the immortal line, "I've got an older guy, and his name is Michael. He just told me about my menstrual cycle. He said the blood on his fingers wasn't from a cut. Maybe someday I'll be a teenage slut." It went to #1, with more radio-friendly lyrics, on KROQ in Los Angeles, and appeared on a volume of Rhino "New Wave's Greatest Hits" -JB)*

Bubble Puppy was just extraordinary, live. They worked so hard on their songs, and they had the energy, live. They really delivered. They're doing this album that's a 60 year anniversary to Sugar Hill Studios, with all these artists that originally recorded there, like Roy Head, he did "Treat Her Right," and, there's another group doing "Hot Smoke and Sassafrass" in the Bubble Puppy's place. They had a couple of new groups doing some of the songs that were originally done there. I don't know when it's coming out, though. We'll be on it, doing a new version of "Face To Face." I'm going to be doing a show with Freddie Krc *(Roky Erickson/Explosives drummer)* and The Freddie Steady Five. The Uglybeats, from Austin, are going to back me up. They're really good. Live they're just high, high energy. They include "Bad Girl" and "Won't Come Back" in their regular set. Getting back to "Won't Come Back," that was the last Thaks song with no outside influences. It turned right at some point, just not quite the same. **There were other good recordings after that, but, it seems Like "Won't Come Back" may be the last thing that still has that kind of teenage innocence, that brashness, y'know?**

That seems to be it. Those were the two songs, "Bad Girl" and "Won't Come Back" always seem to pass the acid test.

"Face To Face " goes off in another direction, though, potentially, that would have been a good direction to pursue.

Sure, but that kind of sets in it's own little category, not really the popular one among the true "Retro" lovers that seem to be out right now. It had a Psychedelic essence to it, where it could have possibly been a better direction. That was the one that did the best for us, saleswise, by far. We worked for, like, a solid year and a half off of that.

I would imagine, if I had heard it on the radio, even the local radio at the time, that would have really stood out. The other two songs stand out cos they have all this energy, but, that guitar sound, and, even the way the vocals aren't quite as over the top, it's interesting, that way. It IS like a Yardbirds thing. Keith Relf used to sing behind the rhythm sometimes, and that made it interesting...

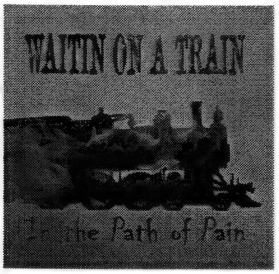
I think that's the main difference with the modern version of "Face To Face," that's exactly it. The vocals were just too much over the top. You've got other people, like Rex, who's always got that Soul music bent to him, and Jazz, and, so, everything's gotta be high, high energy. There's certain songs where the vocal has to be a little more laidback, kind of nonchalant, that's the way it should be.

"**Bad Girl**" Lyrics © Chris Gerniottis. (Used by permission)

World fell in, I'm washed ashore/Goin' through a rotten floor/Lovin' thoughts just start to fade/Of the love I tried to make.
Mutability was bad/Muted ears thought I was glad/Instead she left me here to heal/Oh me, oh my, the pain I feel.
Bad Girl, Bad Girl, Bad Girl, Oh Yeah.
Perspiration starts to run/Thoughts of love are almost done/Go to bed, my thoughts are deep/Fall into a heavy sleep.
Bad Girl, Bad Girl, Bad Girl- Alright.
Tomorrow is another day/Find another girl some way/Until I do, that name remains/That name will come again, again.
Bad Girl, Bad Girl, Bad Girl-Oh yeah.

Zakary Thaks covers include: "Bad Girl": X-Men, Sonars, Ugly Beats. "Won't Come Back": Royal Nonesuch, Chesterfield Kings, Ugly Beats. "Face To Face": Would you believe, MY dumb ass.

Special Thanks (thaks?) To Jeffrey Evans, Ted Roddy, and to Bruce Webb, for turning me on to "Bad Girl" in the first place. Also, to my Senior Year High School Teacher, who (unlike my previous teacher, who thought I was a dumbass), told me I had unlimited potential, and said I had the best grasp of Shakespeare she'd ever seen. Chris Gerniottis, it turns out, is now a High School English Teacher, and "Bad Girl" is the best grasp of Shakespeare from a High School student I'VE ever seen.



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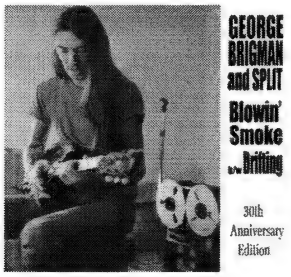

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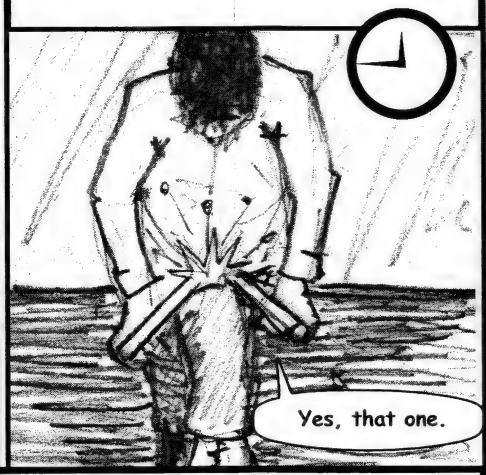
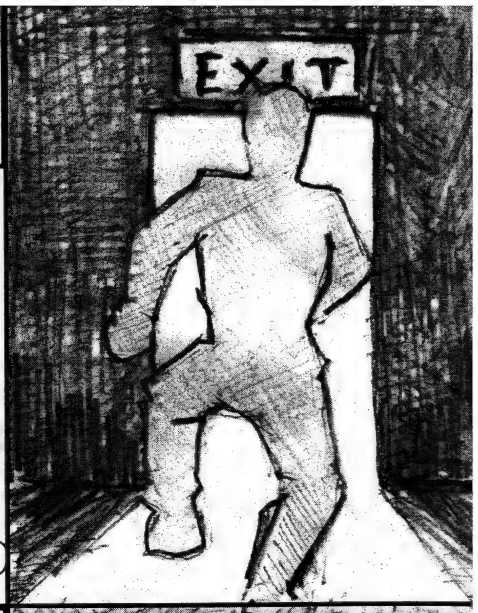
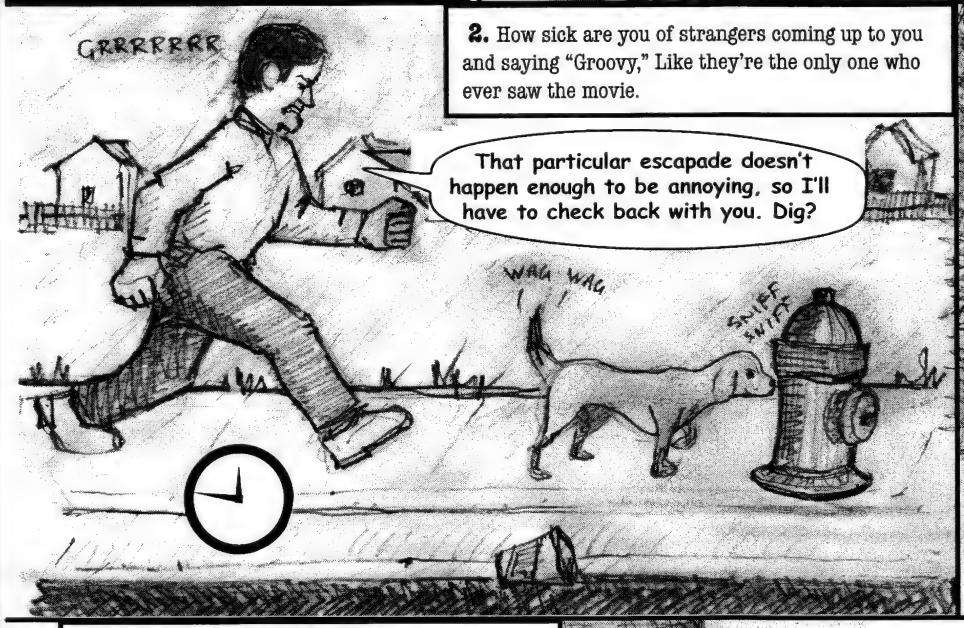
1. Not that I could change anything given that these surveys are conducted survey style, but is there a question I could ask that'd make you scream out in fury, snap your keyboard in two and storm out of the room?

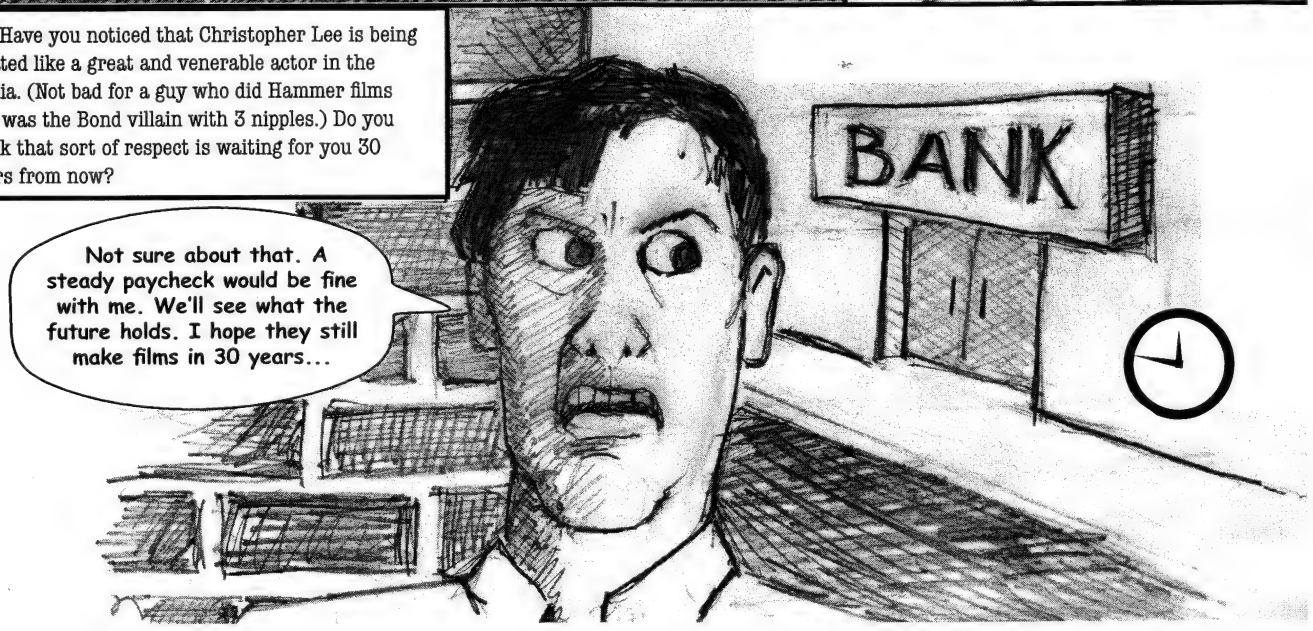




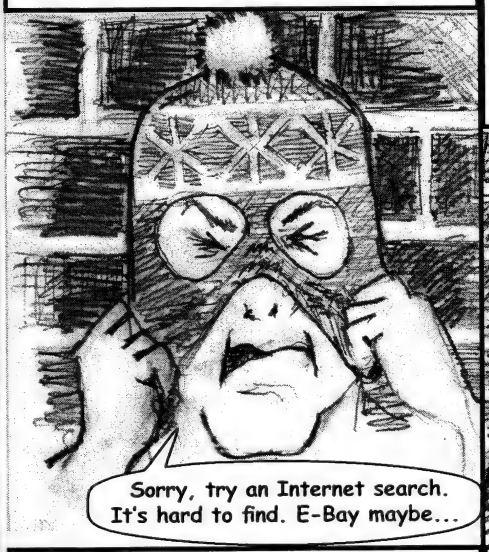
2. How sick are you of strangers coming up to you and saying "Groovy," Like they're the only one who ever saw the movie.



3. Have you noticed that Christopher Lee is being treated like a great and venerable actor in the media. (Not bad for a guy who did Hammer films and was the Bond villain with 3 nipples.) Do you think that sort of respect is waiting for you 30 years from now?



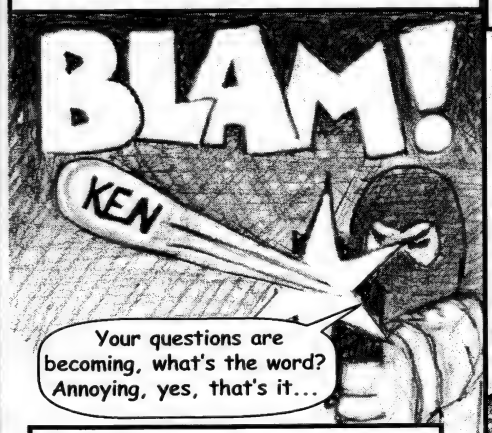
4. I can't find wholesale copies of "Crimewave" anywhere. Can you help me out with that?



5. I used to tell artsy/academic people that anthropologist Joseph Campbell was the producer of Crimewave... instead of you... To trick them into watching it. Given that the story is about the maturation of a normal guy into a hero, do you think Joseph would have liked it?

6. I noticed a little while ago that a lot of your facial expressions and sarcastic intonations are similar to the late Phil Hartman's. That on purpose?

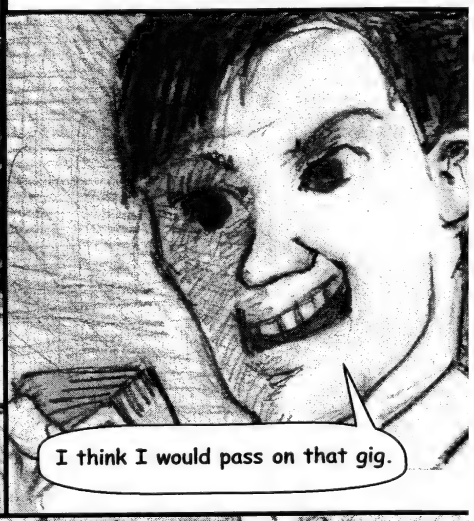
7. I miss Phil's characters on the Simpsons. Would you be willing to do a regular voice or two for them?



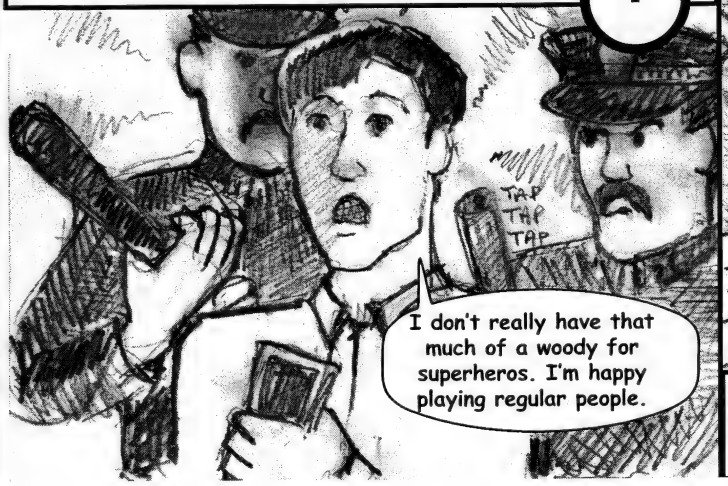
Ooooo..... Dodged the bullet, but caught the poison barb

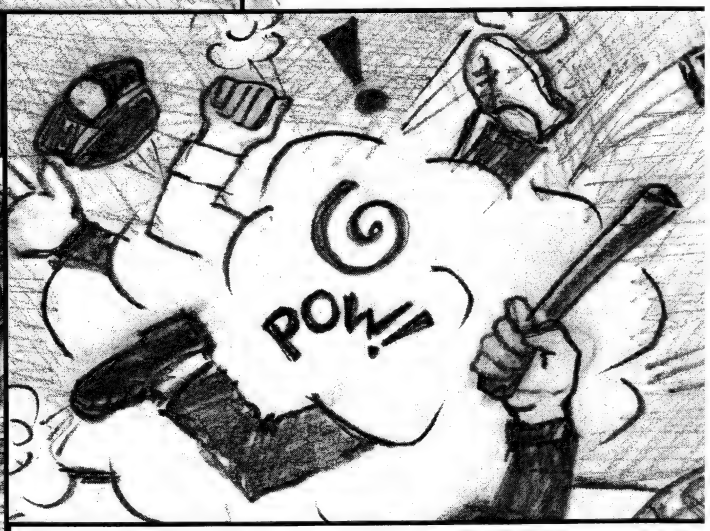
8. In the spirit of "Freddie Versus Jason" and its monetary success, have you guys considered doing a B-Movie version-"Evil Dead Versus The Reanimator."

9. You ever been on Celebrity Jeopardy? How did you/would you do? What Charity did you/ would you give your winnings to?



10. With all the superhero movies getting made, there's got to be a good role for you out there. I was thinking you'd make a good "Green Lantern" or on the other side of the coin, Lex Luthor. What do you think? Who would you want to be?





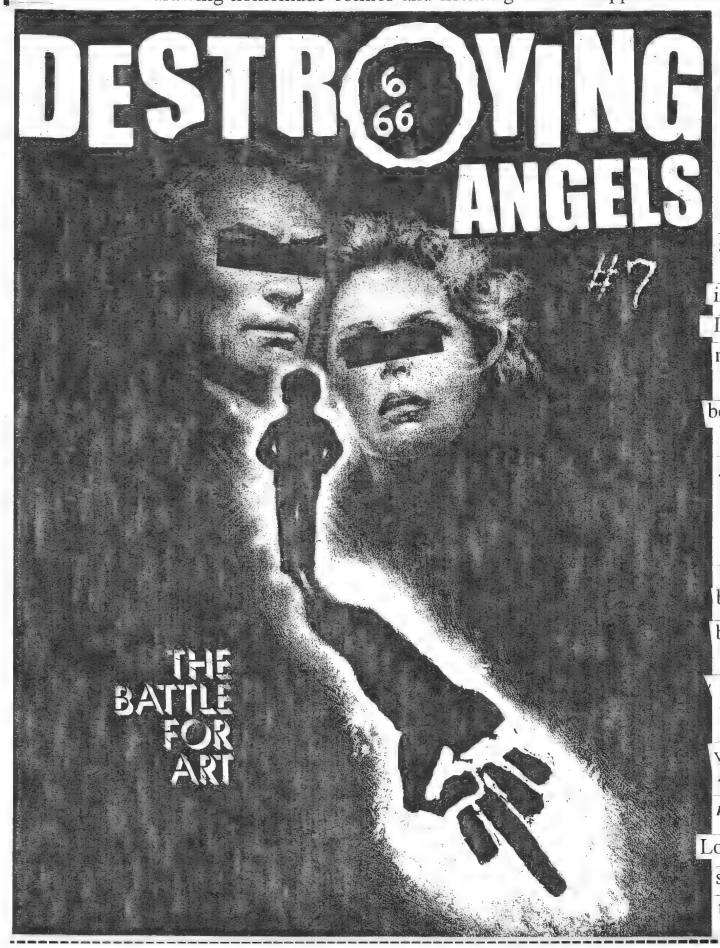
Well look at that. Your time's up and your answers have become...What is the phrase? Awful blasé and arrogant for a crummy b-movie actor. Yeah, that's it.

DENNIS DREAD: 20 QUESTIONS WITH???

An interview with the Portland, Oregon based artist and zine editor Dennis Dread. I first saw Dread's art when I got A Copy of his horror art zine "DESTROYING ANGELS". Both his art and zine were all about monsters , metal, and mayhem. Dennis draws with a Black BIC® Pen, Which I think gives his work an etching like quality. You can see the influence in a lineage from Goya to E.C. Comics, and then punk flier art . Dread's drawings have graced the recorded work of bands like: Abscess, Autopsy, Engorged, Phobia, and Hellschock/ Consume. Dread's zine features Interviews with artists. If you like horror art and heavy music, you should check it out . Past interviews have included such artists as Ed Repka (Nuclear Assault, Municipal Waste),Sean Smithson (Megadeath's Vic Rattlehead), and Joe Petagno (Motorhead).When Mad Marc Rude passed away Dennis dedicated a whole issue to himand his art. The new issue # 9 just came out , and I can't wait to see it. Thanks. Interview was conducted using postage stamps spring.2007

DENNIS & GODZILLA

BY WILLIAM McCURTIN



1. Name & age?

Dennis Dread
June 2, 1972
Gemini
Year of the Rat

2. How did you get started making art? Drawing? Painting?

At the risk of stating the painfully obvious, I'm self-taught. I've only completed one formal art class and it was a college requirement. Drawing is just something I've always done. I have no idea why or how. Some of my earliest memories are of sitting around the house drawing homemade comics and listening to Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath records with my brothers. One of my first comics was about a serial killer called 'The Slasher'. I think the first Halloween movie had just come out and my oldest brother went to see it and reported back to us. I immediately sat down and attempted to capture in pictures the emotional thrill I got from his retelling of the story. I remember drawing that comic in nearly one obsessive sitting and when the black pen I was using ran out of ink, I had one of the characters suddenly break a light bulb and the rest of the story was drawn in blue ink. It was like an improvised visual effect that actually worked. I took the finished comic and tried to sell it door to door in my grandparents' neighborhood. I can't imagine what they must've thought of this creepy little kid with a homemade serial killer comic! It was very bloody and nobody bought it. In many ways this incident has foreshadowed most of my commercial ventures ever since.

3. What was the first LP or tape you got?

My very first record was KISS 'Destroyer'. I loved that Ken Kelly painting with the band playing invisible instruments and dancing over the ruins of a burning world! Shortly after it came out I was jumping on my mom's bed while she was at work. I was almost 5 years old and my brothers were babysitting when I fell off the bed and smashed my head into the corner of a bedside table. There was blood everywhere and they thought I had lost my left eye. I'm told that the only thing that would calm me down while they wiped away the blood was KISS 'Destroyer'. Once my head healed I think my brother just gave me his copy of the record. I've associated art and music with blunt head trauma ever since.

4. How did you get interested in horror art & movies? Favorite movies or directors?

Looking back, it's not a huge leap from collecting bug carcasses and road-kill skulls as a child to horror art and heavy metal. Growing up in New York there was a show on TV called Drive-In Movie that featured either a monster flick or kung-fu flick every Saturday afternoon and I would tune in every

4. week. Before that there was Chiller Theater that showed late night horror movies. Chiller Theater also had great opening theme "music" with this crude claymation hand that rose up from a puddle of blood! It scared the shit out of me but I loved it! I've always found this kind of imagery incredibly powerful. I guess there is something fascinating about uncovering the taboo or hidden, whether it is imaginative art or occult subcultures or human anatomy or death itself. Scary films excel at showing that which is *not meant to be seen*. That's the essential nature of horror. I admire the films of Mario Bava, Lucio Fulci, Dario Argento, Ingmar Bergman, Alfred Hitchcock, and Ken Russell, to name only a few. My favorite directors are those that challenge the viewer on some level and generally transgress etiquette and restraint. A good sense of humor is important too. Ultimately it is the task of all great dramatic art to, as Francis Bacon suggests, "Unlock the values of feeling and therefore return the onlooker to life more violently."

art for PHOBIA
BY Dennis DREAD

5. How did you get interested in punk rock?

Aggressive music and horror have really been parallel artistic influences for most of my life. I get an emotional charge from both that is almost a physical reaction. I discovered punk rock accidentally by playing around on my radio as a kid. One night while I was twisting the dial I landed on a college radio station that was broadcasting what sounded to my uninitiated young ears like the ranting of an insane person. It was disorienting and exhilarating all at once. Just like a good horror film. Later I learned that the song was 'Inside' by Rudimentary Peni, an amazing and haunting introduction to the genre. The first punk record I ever bought was the Misfits 'Evil Live' because the colorful horror-inspired cover art resembled a more primitive version of the Iron Maiden covers I worshipped at the time. I still remember how weird it seemed that they were cursing and fighting with their own audience! This was very liberating to my concept of musicians and artists as somehow disengaged, mystical entertainers. "You think you'll get out of the hospital in time?"

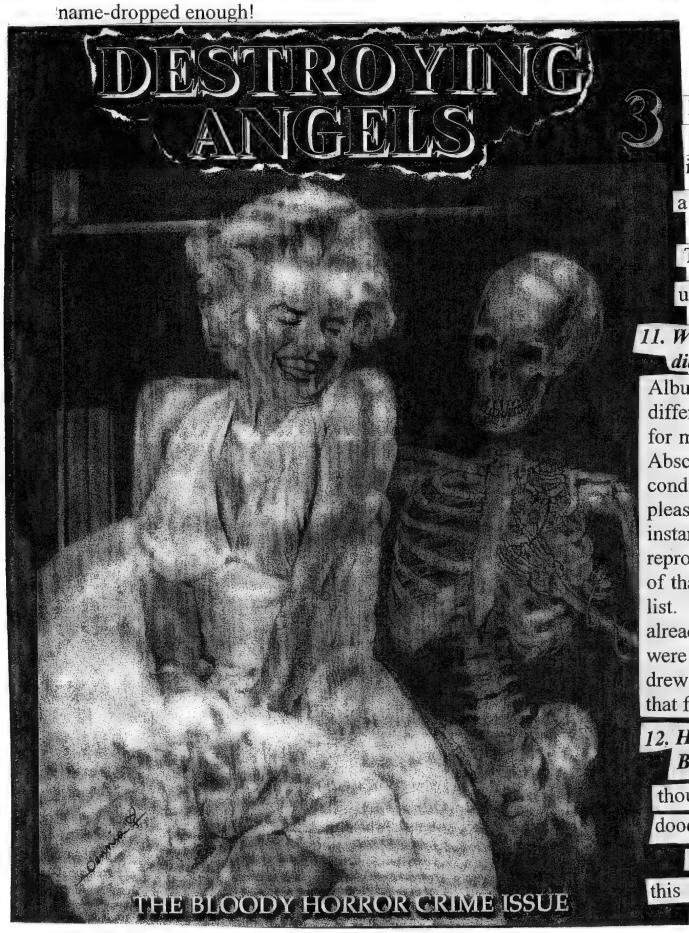
6. What was your first punk show or concert? Did you see a lot of CBGB shows

My first punk show was Suicidal Tendencies on their 'Join the Army' tour. I guess some purists would argue that they were metal by that point, but it was during the crossover era and that was my first night of stage diving and taking sucker punches in the pit. It was at a little club called Streets in New Rochelle and I jumped on stage and sang 'War Inside My Head' with Mike Muir. It was amazing and...uh...it changed my life. Probably for the worse. I didn't catch many shows at CBGB's, or anywhere else for that matter. I grew up about 40 minutes away from some of the most powerful hardcore ever recorded but when you're a young kid with no car and few friends, you might as well be living on another planet. My radio was like an umbilical cord during the 80's. I did manage to catch a memorable Born Against show at CB's but those matinees were sometimes incredibly unfriendly and it was an ordeal just getting through that neighborhood alone sometimes. During my last year of high school I set up an internship with CBGB's as an excuse to go down and hang out every Friday night. I actually got school credit for sitting with Dennis Dunn and learning how to operate the stage lights. Dennis is the guy on Agnostic Front's 'Live at CBGB' record that gets up on stage and threatens to kill the audience if they don't quit fighting. He was actually a remarkably nice guy. I learned a lot from him. Aside from that I caught some great bands at other venues like The Damned, Cro-Mags, Carnivore, and Danzig on his first solo tour. I saw Guns N Roses at L'Amours in Brooklyn before they broke big with 'Appetite for Destruction'. I also saw Anthrax at L'amours on the 'Among the Living' tour. I think it was a Christmas Eve show with Anvil Bitch, who had a great song called "Maggot Infestation"!

7. What was the first zine you saw?

I discovered zines through Fangoria magazine. When you ordered a subscription to Fangoria you got to post a few free lines in the classified section. I posted a blurb requesting pen pals and pretty soon I started receiving letters from all over the country, including weird bondage photos from some creepy English guy. Some people sent their Xerox "horror fan newsletters". I don't even remember them being called zines back then. A few years later, when I was about 16, my drawings were first published in a relatively literate horror movie newsletter called Scareaphanalia. Strangely enough, the guy who put out that zine and gave my crude drawings an audience has since gone on to become the managing editor at Fangoria magazine! Around that same time, when I finally learned to navigate the Metro North train system and began exploring New York City, I discovered See Hear on 7th Street in the Lower East Side. Back then, See Hear was a tiny shop at the bottom of a narrow staircase off the sidewalk and it was completely filled with "self-made magazines". There was always some cranky guy at the counter, but if you checked your bag you could just hang out and read for a long time without anyone bothering you. I discovered a ton of cool zines down at See Hear, including Factsheet 5, which opened up the world of D.I.Y. publishing. I didn't start publishing my own zine until many years later. ***8. Who were some of your favorite artists growing up? And now?***

Growing up I was influenced by the usual trash-culture ephemera of the day. I loved exploitation movie poster art, Wacky Packages, Marvel comics, cartoons, and tattoo flash. Tattoos were still very underground and illegal in New York during the early 80's so getting my hands on a tattoo flash catalog was very exciting. Video stores were like art galleries. I was also a huge fan of Frank Frazetta. Obviously I was influenced by album cover artists like Derrik Riggs, Pushead, Nick Blinko, Joe Petagno, Ed Repka, Mad Marc Rude, and Michael "Away" Langevin of Voivod. As a teenager I began visiting the Metropolitan Museum of Art and delved deeper into more classical styles, specifically the darker spiritual work of Durer, Bosch, and Goya. Around the same time my mind was blown by the discovery of psychedelic posters and underground artists, most notably Greg Irons, Joe Coleman, Robert Williams, Robert Crumb, and S. Clay Wilson. As an adult it was a revelation to discover the obscure Symbolist movement, particularly völkisch and occult-oriented artists such as Franz Von Stuck, Hermann Hendrich, Arnold Bocklin, Franz Von Stassen, John Delville, Felicien Rops, and Alfred Kubin. Other influential artists are Rosaleen Norton, Austin Osman Spare, Fidus, Arno Brecker, Arthur Rackham, and Theodor Kittelsen. Nowadays I find inspiration everywhere, especially among my own close friends and peers. But I think I've already name-dropped enough!



9. ***Who are some of your favorite authors?? Or books?*** I try to always be reading and learning and I have a small library of favorite books that I return to periodically. My father had a pile of old existential novels and I was always sort of looking for traces of him so I delved into these books at a very young age. Among them was The Boston Strangler by Gerold Frank, a true-crime account of serial murderer Albert DeSalvo. I plowed through that book and became fascinated with the idea that a man could do those things. I barely understood sex, so the idea of "sex murders" was pretty intense. I also read my father's copy of Hunter Thompson's biography of the Hell's Angels for a 5th grade book report and kicked the knowledge of gang rape to my squirming classmates. Despite these early literary influences, I'm actually not a particularly morbid or violent person. I think of my drawings as stories and the best stories to tell involve brutality, blood, sex, and death. I didn't invent that formula. Take a look at the stories people have been telling each other since recorded time. The Eddas, the Bible, the Upanishads, the epic Greek poems of Homer. These stories have survived because they somehow unleash emotion and unhinge the intellect.

10. What inspires you to make art now? Deadlines!

11. What are some of your favorite album covers? That you did? Or other artists did?

Album covers were the first "art" I ever saw and I love tons of covers for very different reasons. It's really difficult to narrow down my favorites to a small list. As for my own stuff, it's difficult to be objective but I really like my latest drawing for Abscess. I worked on that particular drawing under some incredibly stressful conditions but the results are very close to what I imagined and the band was very pleased. It even reproduced well on the CD, which isn't always the case. For instance, I really like my drawings for the Hellshock/Consume split 7" but they reproduced very dark and lost much of their depth. I also did two different versions of that back cover because the Hellshock guys accidentally gave me the wrong song list. I think they decided to change one of their songs at the last minute but I had already incorporated the song titles into the art. So the first 500 copies of that 7" were sold during their European tour with an explanation and when they returned I drew a new back cover with the correct song titles for the repress. Maybe someday that first pressing will be collectible.

12. How did you get started using a Bic pen? Do you ever use india ink? Or just Bic pen? Drawing with Bic pens isn't something I ever really thought about or planned. I was using ballpoint pens as a kid at school, just doodling all over the margins of my books. I was constantly getting in trouble for not paying attention. I like to think that these days teachers might recognize this sort of behavior as a strength and suggest art lessons or

alternative curriculums, but back then it was really frowned upon. My mom discouraged the arts because our family always struggled financially and I think she wanted us to be more economically stable. Turns out she was right! Anyway, I realized I was able to get some very brooding tones and rich textures so I kept it up. Eventually this heavily shaded noir style emerged and at a certain point I made a conscious decision to produce larger scale drawings on illustration board. I never considered myself an "artist" so I was unhindered by the rules of proper artistic media. Ballpoint pens were what I had available. Some people look at my art and ask why I don't just paint, as if painting would be a more valid and respectable craft, but I'm still challenged and excited by ballpoint pen. I've tried lots of different media such as pastels, scratchboard, various paints and inks, and colored pencils but nothing gives me quite the same effect. Someday I would really love to try tattooing, but so far I haven't had much luck setting up a worthwhile apprenticeship.

13. Have you ever seen a ghost? Angel? Monster?

Many years ago, while fasting alone for 9 days in the Sonoran desert, I experienced visions that served as my initiation into the Nordic runic mysteries and the Odinist path. This doesn't seem the appropriate forum to discuss those visions.

14. Have you ever had your art used without permission? Or bootlegged on shirts & patches or tattoos?

Yeah, my art has appeared in many "unofficial" formats. I've seen some really cool tattoos of my art and I very much appreciate when people send me photos. Sometimes I even post them on my blog. I was at a punk fest here in Portland recently and was surprised to see several of my older drawings walk past me sewn onto hoodies. I usually don't mind this so much and if the print is homemade it's occasionally flattering. The bootleggers that I don't condone are the parasites that deliberately profit from my labor and don't ask permission or send me samples for approval. Some chump in Oakland created a silk-screened show flyer with one of my drawings and deliberately removed my signature from the art and added his own! How low can a punk get?

15. Do you like showing your art in a gallery setting? Do you have any shows coming up? Where?

I'm curating a special exhibit of underground art here in Portland, Oregon this summer! The show is titled **Entartete Kunts**, a snide reference to the German term "degenerate art" and the infamous 1937 Nazi art exhibit that featured work that was officially banned by the fascist Government. The show will feature a broad range of underground artists, from well-known veterans to emerging unknowns, and includes some of my personal favorites like Ed Repka, Sean Taggart, Stephen Blickenstaff, Jeff Gaither, and Jim Blanchard. The opening reception will take place on **June 21st at Optic Nerve Arts** located at 1223 NE Alberta Street. I've purposely organized this show to coincide with a 2-day metal fest so it's a great excuse to visit Portland and get drunk with me! I'm already planning to make **Entartete Kunts** an annual event. Gallery shows like this can be very fun and I've learned a lot by subjecting my own art to the merciless scrutiny of the general public. For instance, it is very interesting and often rewarding to observe how a diverse crowd will react to my work. There is also opportunity for valuable critical feedback, which I believe is essential for any meaningful growth. That said, I always remain very much in control of how and where my work is presented so my shows tend to be more like parties and less like pretentious "art scenes". I just wish framing wasn't so expensive!

16. Do you still work with runaway teenagers in Portland? How did you start that job?

I actually operate two different non-profit street outreach programs. Some of the kids I meet are runaways but many of the homeless people I work with are what we call "youth identified" adults who, for various reasons, haven't been able to get their shit together and transition into sustainable homes and jobs. Most are dealing with severe trauma, addiction, and mental health issues. I go out under bridges and into squats and camps and find these people and try to provide some supportive options. It's exhausting and thankless and occasionally rewarding work. I keep my art very separate from my day job and, for the most part, nobody I work with knows that I spend my nights hunched over a drawing table howling at the moon. Don't tell anyone! I got started working with homeless people shortly after I moved to Portland and couldn't find a job. I was a dirty punk with few references and dreads down past my ass. The only places that would hire me were porn shops, bars, and the homeless youth shelter. I needed glasses and my teeth cleaned so I stuck with the one that offered benefits. Perhaps not entirely surprising, I soon found that I was good at connecting with young fuck-ups. And the hours worked well for drawing. I often complain that my day job keeps me from my artwork, but I also think that if I were drawing all the time I would probably get bored and complain that I don't have time to do anything meaningful in my community. Ironically, I'm about one paycheck away from homelessness myself.

17. Favorite time of day? Favorite food? Favorite drink?

My favorite time of day is night! I enjoy the solitude between midnight and 5am and that's when I do my best drawing, writing, and thinking. My favorite food is meatless. I've been vegetarian for about 10 years, with the exception of some occasional meat at solstice potlucks. My favorite drink is good strong coffee. And beer. I should probably drink more water.

18. How do you think living in the N.W. affects/effects your art/life?

I've been told that parts of Oregon closely resemble Scandinavia and that aligns well with my spiritual and aesthetic coordinates. Portland itself is a beautiful city that inspires me very much. I like the rain and the architecture and the trees and the moss. I don't think living here has affected my art much in terms of style or content but, until recently, Portland has been a very affordable place to live and that has allowed me to be a starving artist but still enjoy a relatively comfortable quality of life. Unfortunately this is rapidly changing as people continue to move here in droves. Please don't move to Portland. coffee is weak and the women are ugly…

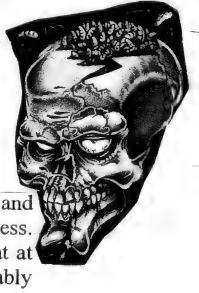
19. Favorite thing about Portland? And the worst thing about Portland?

Aside from what I've already mentioned, one of the things that distinguish Portland from many other U.S. cities is our combination of affordable rent and basements. There is a hidden D.I.Y. "basement culture" here that seems to sprout from the mold. Everyone in Portland seems to have a basement where they make art, homebrew their own booze, play music, sew their own clothing, and generally behave like crafty trolls. Portland is also geographically positioned between mountains, desert, and ocean which makes escape from humans much easier. The worst things about Portland are probably mold, methamphetamine, and gentrification. Mold constantly threatens to ruin my drawings. Meth causes crime, pollution, and ugly people. Gentrification is rapidly destroying the last vestiges of historic architecture, affordable housing, and the creativity that made moving here attractive for all these hip assholes in the first place.

20. What's next for you? Are you working on any cool projects?

I feel like I'm just getting started! The group exhibit in June has me very excited about underground art again. There are lots of other projects in the works for the coming months but I won't mention anything specific. Suffice to say, there will be more album covers and a few picture discs later this year. I'm also finally getting to draw a full gatefold! I'll be getting around to the next issue of Destroying Angels in the next few months too. I might even compile some of the early issues into a book of some kind. I'm getting more requests for my work than ever before and I only wish I had time to accept more offers. But I try not to overextend myself so I can continue creating quality work and avoid burnout. If drawing ever feels like a shitty job, I'll quit. William, I really want to thank you for taking an interest in my work and my opinion on all this. It means a lot. Anyone that wants to get in touch should write a letter. Or better yet, send me a drawing!

April Fool's Day, 2007



Dennis Dread

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THE FINAL CURTAIN

Gentleman John Battles is a great fan of all and a good friend to many of the legends of Rock & Roll, monster movies, late night TV, and all points in between. Here he pays his final respects to some favorites that recently made the transition from mortal to immortality.

JUMPIN' GENE SIMMONS - If I live to be 100, I'll never forget my one meeting with Jumpin' Gene Simmons (just to clear the air: No relation to Chaim "Gene Simmons" Witz of Kiss, nor actress Jean Simmons). The Three Stooges of Rock, Jake Austen, James Porter, and myself, had made a pilgrimage to Hickory Hills, Illinois, somewhere between the Far South Side of Chicago and The Innermost Part of Outer Mongolia, to see a rare triple bill featuring three Rockabilly legends, Marvin Rainwater, Sleepy LaBeef, and Jumpin' Gene Simmons (it was, however, billed as a Country music show). The event was held at The Sabre Room, an incredible banquet hall/sometimes music venue that's been done in OLD Las Vegas, not new Las Vegas, since it originally opened in 1950...I can scarcely describe the splendor of this place. You'd kind of expect Louis Prima to show you to your table, while the whole Rat Pack shoots craps under your feet! Jake and I got there early, intending to set up an interview with the three headliners. We spotted Rainwater and the ever-affable LaBeef, and both were complying, but, Jake had to make like Mr. Dillon and go back to town to pick up James. In the interim, I found and met Mr. Simmons. He knew about *Roctober*, obviously, because of Jake's excellent interview with him in "The Kissue," the cover of which was shown in Playboy (As a matter of fact, they showed more of Jake's Kiss stuff than they did Mariah Carey's stuff in the promised lingerie pictorial in the current issue), and he was more than willing to do an interview for "Chic-A-Go-Go" when Jake returned with his video camera, but, in the meantime, he asked me if I'd like to have a drink with him? UH-OH... Simmons looked fine when I met him, and seemed clear as a bell, but, when we went to the bar, and he asked if I'd like to do a shot with him, I told him, thanks, but, I really don't drink. His eyes got big, he drew back, and said, "You don't drink? You're a dangerous man..." I jokingly replied, "That's right, because I remember what happened the next day." I didn't know how right I was. Bear in mind, Gene having a couple of shots before the show would NOT have been a big thing, but, I was unaware that a yet-undisclosed individual (whose name will not be revealed, as with my Arthur Lee obituary, to protect the guilty) had already taken him out drinking all afternoon. Alternating between shots of whiskey and tequila, I watched his rapid Descent into the Maelstrom. Mind you, he was laughing a lot, and telling me some funny stories, most of which culminated in a beyond self-deprecating assessment of his own looks. Even though Simmons had maintained a ruggedly handsome appearance (a bit like Adam West looks today. You can laugh, but you should look so good at his age), and he obviously didn't have anything on Handsome Billy Lee Riley in the early days, but, he sure as Hell didn't look like his running buddy, Ray Harris (it's cruel, I know, but that man could have modeled for monster masks!), much less, the better known Gene Simmons! Gene told me about a scam in which Dick Clark was offering to send artists who'd been on any of his shows a video copy of the broadcasts they'd appeared on for a mere fifty dollars and a copy of the artist's birth certificate (!!!). "I thought fifty bucks was a lot, too," he said, "But I hadn't seen my performance of "Haunted House" on American Bandstand since it originally aired in 1964, so I ordered it, and, boy, was I sorry I did!" "Why?," I asked. "BECAUSE I WAS SO DAMN UGLEHH!!!" I mean, just as you're not truly naked until you're "Nekkid," you are not ugly, for real, unless you're "UGLEHH!!!" Then he told me, "I'd forgotten that I also did the flipside, "Hey, Hey Little Girl" (an early interracial love song) on Dick Clark's show, and, man, I was sorry of that!" You'd think most artists would be glad to score one of their own, "lost," TV performances, especially if they'd paid for the honor. Not Jumpin' Gene Simmons. "Here I was, doing TWO songs! And I was so damn UGLEHH!!!" Then he told me a little bit about hanging out with Elvis, and how he even acted as an extra in one of his movies (Elvis was known to bring in some of his buddies for background shots in his pictures). "I don't remember which one it was... One of those "Beach" movies he did in the Early 60s. But, they took all my parts out..." "Why?," "BECAUSE I WAS SO DAMN UGLEHHHH!!!" Well, we were having a pretty good time (aren't you glad I remembered everything?), but, by the time Jake and James returned, I pointed to Simmons, sitting alone at a table, looking up at the ceiling and doing "Harem Dancer" hand gestures in the air, and I told my boys, "There's Gene. I'm sure he'll be glad to sign your stuff, but I DON'T think we're gonna get an interview out of him." Not only that, but, it was still several hours til showtime. If they'd had him go on first, he might have still been capable of doing an abbreviated, inebriated, set. He went on something like SIXTH (there were more several support acts, with only Chicago-area channeler of Louisiana Hayride-era Presley, Nick Willett, committed to my

memory). Still standing, and seemingly ready to give it his all (whatever that was at the moment), Simmons finally stepped up to the mike and did two weepy country songs (one of which was the George Jones classic, "She Thinks I Still Care," which included the ad-lib, "Just because I still haunt the same old haunted houses...Sheeee thinks I still care"). His delivery was shaky, but, he made a good enough showing on those two numbers, all things considered...Then, it happened. Gene fell and landed on his ass, guitar still strapped on. He busted out laughing, and staggered back to the mike: " I FUCKED UP!!!," he told the audience of blue-haired ladies and feathered-haired, suede denim-bedecked (sub)Urban Cowgirls, "I DON'T GIVE A CRAP!!! I FUCKED UP!!!" James and I agreed, that even though it isn't nice to laugh at a train wreck, and despite the fact that Simmons was the artist we'd looked most forward to seeing, IT WAS STILL THE MOST ROCK 'n' Roll MOMENT OF THE WHOLE NIGHT!!!" Gene came by our table, after being shown offstage, and James and I tried to console him, as we both felt that he was good while he was up there. Gene grabbed James' hands, smiled, and said, "YEEAHH!! ROCK 'n' Roll!!! ME AND YOU AND A DOG NAMED "BOO"!!!" If you want the REAL lowdown on Jumpin' Gene Simmons, consult *Roctober* #22, but, in a nutshell: Gene Simmons started out in 1947 in Tupelo, Mississippi, doing a Country and Bluegrass act with his brothers (called "The Simmons Bros." Go figure). A chance meeting in 1953 with a visiting former Tupelo resident, Elvis Presley, left little impression on Simmons (he even declined an offer to play Gene's guitar), but, within a short time, he was turning the Memphis area on it's ear. Elvis' manager, Bob Neal, contacted Gene and asked him to put a bill together, with his brothers, around Presley. After the show, Simmons asked Elvis if he could get him an audition with Sun Records. Elvis promised to put in a good word about The Simmons Bros. to Sam Phillips, who soon phoned Simmons, thanking him for taking such good care of his boy, and inviting him to audition at Sun. Phillips made it clear that Simmons and his brothers were not what he was looking for, though they COULD be. In his usual, subtle, manner, Sam told the band to "Take your fiddle and mandolin and wrap 'em around a tree, and come back with some hot guitar!" Gene and his Brother, Carl, returned to Sun, recording Rockabilly with such unbridled passion, one would think they were BORN playing it. Phillips was soon preoccupied with juggling hitmakers like Carl Perkins, Jerry Lee Lewis and Johnny Cash, and Simmons' first single, "Drinkin' Wine" (a variation on the earlier "Drinkin' Scotch") didn't even see the light of day until 1958, almost two full years after his first recording session. While the song is a smoker, and a unanimously agreed classic, it's time had come and gone. Simmons cut 16 (known) sides for Sun, many of 'em absolute killers, but he never got his shot at the big time while under contract to Sam Phillips. He returned to the Memphis clubs, and soon got involved with a burgeoning Late 50s Rock 'n' Roll scene in Canada, working with his friends, Harold Jenkins (Conway Twitty) and Ronnie Hawkins, the latter having relocated to Canada. Simmons went on to release a few, unsuccessful, sides for Chess. He was also brought in as a featured vocalist in The Bill Black Combo. Presley, Bill Black's former boss, was in the service by this time, and Black was keen to start a new recording outfit, focusing on instrumentals. The "Hi" label, run by former Sun Rockabilly artist, "Uglehh!" Ray Harris, had several hit singles with Black's group, and, eventually, a monster smash with "Haunted House," a rockin' novelty song that had been previously recorded for Johnny Fuller on Specialty, and an associate of Gene's, Sam The Sham (that's a looooong story, though. Read all about it in Roctober #22). Gene's version aided in holding off the British onslaught, and stands today as one of the last Rockabilly-oriented hits of the sixties, along with The Bobby Fuller Four's "I Fought The Law" (perhaps THE last). It's been covered by artists as diverse as Jerry Lee Lewis, Hasil Adkins, Bruce Springsteen, Antiseen, and myself. Gene's story doesn't begin and end with the two best-known songs he recorded on Sun and Hi, respectively. For Sun, he recorded frantic Rockers like "I Done Told You!," "Juicy Fruit" and "I Don't Love You, Baby," plus the most apeshit versions of "Guitar Boogie" and "Shake Rattle n'' Roll" you could imagine. "You ain't no punk, you PUNK!." Likewise, his lesser-known tracks for Hi, like the fuzz-drenched stomper, "Bossy Boss" (worthy of a later Cramps LP), Bluesey (tho' upbeat) numbers like "Goin' Back To Memphis " and "Hotel Happiness," the excellent, moody "Go On, Shoes" (In which he puts in a great, deep-sounding manly man vocal), and a successful stab at Folk-Rock with "I'm a Ramblin' Man," which evokes The Charlatans as much as it does The Byrds. All these songs, and more, have unforetold pleasures to offer the listener. Gene was nothing if not diverse. After languishing in obscurity for many years (though "Haunted House" would get dusted off and given a few spins every Halloween), Simmons got on the Rockabilly Revival bandwagon in Europe in the 80s. Of course, he also had some success as a songwriter, penning "Indian Outlaw," Tim McGraw's first hit, and various songs for Gene Watson, Barbara Mandrell, Mel Tillis, and others. He continued recording in a mostly Country style, and performed sporadically. I'm sorry to say, I wasn't really surprised when I found out that he wasn't going to appear at The Ponderosa Stomp last year, as scheduled, but, I knew that he was having health issues at the time. Now, the afflictions that only affect the living are gone, "BUT, NOT ROCK 'n' Roll!! COUNTRY AND WESTERN!!! Rn'B!!! ME AND YOU AND A DOG NAMED "BOO"!!!" I mean, "JUKEBOX PLAYIN' A SAD, SAD, SONG. ENTITLED "BABY, YOU'RE DOIN' ME WRONG!" BOUGHT THIS HOUSE, AND I AM BOSS! AIN'T NO HAINT GONNA RUN ME OFF!!!"

MARISKA VERES-One of the most underrated groups of their time (late 60s-Mid 70s), Holland's Shocking Blue are better known today for their one U.S. hit single, the remarkable "Venus," but that's only the beginning of their story...or, is it? Robbie van Leeuwen, an exceptional guitarist and songwriter from the popular Nederbeat combo, The Motions, conceived of The Shocking Blue in 1967. While they got off to a good start, with the Dutch hit single, "Lucy Brown is Back in Town", it was plain for the group's leader to see that then-vocalist, Fred de Wilde, was the weakest link. Goodbye. Mariska Veres' vocal-stylings, as well as her undeniable beauty, were the perfect vehicle to take van Leeuwen's vision over the top. It seemed there was no limit to van Leeuwen's style and sensibilities, as he incorporated West Coast, Indian, Psych, Country, Pop, Blues, R&B, and even Gallic themes into the group's vast, and remarkably consistent, repertoire. Mariska Veres proved more than capable of taking on the challenge, but, could she handle stardom? "Venus," the group's first, and biggest, international hit, brought with it a new Rock 'n' Roll sex goddess for the 70s (the single was released in 1969, but sold well into 1970, particularly in the states), "The summit of beauty and love, and Venus was her name..." Veres presented herself as confident, strong, and unattainable. In later years, she stated that she'd resented being treated like a bird in a gilded cage. She became an increasingly private person, and never married, but seemed to enjoy a less restricted relationship with her fans after Shocking Blue broke up (In 1975 or, possibly, late '74). Veres went on to pursue a solo career, working sporadically with van Leeuwen, and fronting her own version of Shocking Blue on the "Oldies" circuit in Europe. Much has been said about how Veres did not age well, but her fans seemed to be able to see past the fact that the one-time goddess had reverted back to human form. Her singing voice remained noticeably strong (there's an abundance of proof of this on youtube. Whereas there used to be only a handful of clips available, there are now dozens). After "Venus" hit, their one, outstanding, U.S. album came out, though the group continued to release LPs in Europe and Japan until their breakup. Shocking Blue toured The U.S., Europe, Asia and South America, and continued to have hits on the continent, though they were regarded as a "One-Hit Wonder" in America. Mariska Veres is sometimes slagged for her broken English phrasing (oK, It's hard to overlook "The Godness on the mountain top .".), but to that, I say A) ABBA made a multi-million dollar career from the same approach, and B) YOU go record a hit record in Dutch, okay? "Venus" spawned many cover versions, notably Tom Jones' version, which gets around the gender issue by rapping, "And this is what SHE tells ya, now, "I'm your Venus..." (yes, Banal-a-rama's insipid 80s Dance Pop version inspired a total of ONE domestic Shocking Blue retrospective, the fine "Classics" LP, and went on to probably become better known than the original. Sad, but, true). Dallas Psych gods, Lithium Xmas, were covering "Love Buzz," a song as exotic and entrancing as Mariska herself, as early as 1986 (I remember doing a radio show with them in Dallas one of the first times they performed it), though, of course, Nirvana's version reached far more people, many of whom thought Cobain wrote the song. Chicago's own Lava Sutra performed "Hot Sand," the U.S. flipside to "Venus," and another scorcher, as part of their "International Music Series." Shocking Blue left behind an extraordinary back catalogue, from "Send Me a Postcard," which sounds like Freakbeat's last stand (though that honor would probably go to The Troggs' "Feels Like a Woman" and/or The Equals' "I Can See, But You Don't Know"), to "Wild Rose," which sports a Stonesy guitar and an Irish Brogue, the unbelievably sexy, Bo Diddley beatin' "Lovin' Girl," the much too late, but who cares, Flower Child anthem "Morning Sun," the haunting dark Psych of "Daemon Lover," which should have been in a Mario Bava or Jesse Franco film, to the superb Raga Rock instrumental, "Aga Ragh," the cheerful, though extremely naughty "Inkpot" and a killer cover version of The Easybeats' "Good Times." There are so many other timeless classics in their back catalogue, it's hard to believe....But, you will. To Mariska, "You should live twice, and in my rhyme. Ages of ages, your glory will shine. Wild Rose, go the way you want to. Wild Rose, I only want to see you that way."-"Wild Rose" (Robbie van Leeuwen).

YVONNE DECARLO - Well, if you want to apply the "Glass Half Empty/Half Full" theory to Yvonne DeCarlo's career, you could say her role as Lily on *The Munsters* is the reason she became typecast, or the reason she's loved so well, today. What becomes a legend most, indeed? It was no easy run to get to where she was by the time *The Munsters* debuted (incidentally, one week after I was born). When Yvonne was only three years old, she and her mother were abandoned by her father. Though she was born and raised in Vancouver, Yvonne's Mother tried to get her beautiful daughter a break in Hollywood, as did many struggling parents, as The U.S. went heading into World War II. She eventually played some small parts in various films in The Early 40's, finally landing a starring role in *Salome, Where She Danced* in 1945, a fiscal, if not critical, success. It was the beginning of her association with Universal Studios, but, we'll get into that in a moment... Her next big role was that of Sephora, Moses' wife, in the epic smash-hit, *The Ten Commandments*, released in 1956. A lot of men, I'm sure, concurred that they'd have walked through the desert for

HER. "Band of Angels" followed, as did many favorable responses to her performance in said film, but, it was the Late 50s, and television was calling. Yvonne appeared on TV shows like "Bonanza" and "The Virginian," and even became a recording artist in her own right. Unlike a lot of her peers who'd, unwittingly, kick off the "Golden Throats" genre, Ms. De Carlo could actually sing (she can be heard "opening" for The Standells in the beloved classic, "Far-Out Munsters"). In 1964, The Beatles weren't the only ones tearing Pop Culture a new one by reinventing a pre-existing medium. A Monster craze happened, seemingly overnight, that year. Kids weren't the only ones reading *Famous Monsters of Filmland* magazine anymore, and, not one, but TWO Monster sitcoms debuted that Fall. *The Addams Family*, based on the wickedly funny *New Yorker* cartoons by the incomparable Chas. Addams, provided healthy competition to *The Munsters*, billed as "America's First Family of Fright." While *The Addams Family* was conceived with the artist's full cooperation, *The Munsters* were in the unique position of having full access to the carefully-guarded Universal Monsters' back catalogue (the show was produced by the great Nat Hiken, of *Car 54* fame, for Universal Studios, hence the copyrighted images of Dracula, Frankenstein's Monster, The Wolfman, and even The Creature From The Black Lagoon, were legally used to comic effect). De Carlo, perhaps inadvertently, challenged the standards of beauty of the day, and won. As Lily Munster, the star was heavily made up to create the effect of a Bride of Frankenstein/Dracula's Daughter hybrid, but, she remained quite the stunner. In fact, some men prefer her to the "unfortunate" member of The Munster Clan, Marilyn. Hers was the classic scenario of the Wife who's a good bit sharper than her well-meaning hubby, but, stands by him through thick and thin. The Munsters' inability to understand their own uniqueness made them that much more loveable, and a sure bet to get your young kids turned on to monsters without frightening them. Of course, De Carlo's performance is more understated than that of her co-star, Fred Gwynne. The dynamic between them works beautifully. They look like they actually ENJOY being married, moreso than many other TVcouples. After two successful seasons, "The Munsters" were put to rest. A strong argument can be made that they never really "Jumped The Shark." A full-length feature film, "Munster, Go Home," kept the Munster name alive, in full color, yet, though it seems that none of the series' key players really eclipsed their given roles on the celebrated TV series, even after going ways as disparate as writing and illustrating children's books (Fred Gwynne), recording and performing Rock music (butch Patrick), and running for Mayor and Governor of New York City and State (Al Lewis). Yvonne carried on in the movies, never really attaining the heights she had previously, but, always a welcome sight to her legions of fans. Some of her better-known later roles were in movies like *Blazing Stewardesses*, a (very, very) light sex romp, directed by legendary schlock auteur Al Adamson, who, had he not been brutally murdered in the 90s, would have probably attained respectability, by now. The movie is of more historic interest in that it nearly marked the last appearance of The Three Stooges. Moe Howard, semi-retired and in his seventies, had agreed to provide some comic relief with Larry Fine and Joe DiRita, which would have been their first appearance as The Three Stooges in several years. While the movie was still in the planning stages, Larry Fine suffered a debilitating stroke, and, though he gave Howard his blessing to bring in a substitute, his long time friend and partner declined. The availability of 30's-40's era Comedy teams at an all time low, the two surviving Ritz Bros., who appear to be even older than Dr. Howard and Dr. Fine, were brought in as their replacements. Yvonne also had a supporting role in the Teen/Sex/Occult farce, *Satan's Cheerleaders*, in which she plays the wife of a small town Sheriff who moonlights as the High Priest of a phony devil cult (I'm not making this up!). As the High Priestess, De Carlo discovers that a beautiful cheerleader has the power of White Magic, which, with Lucifer's own assistance, can bring their bogus operation down in flames, so to speak. You can say appearing in such Z-movie trash would be the nadir of the beloved Actress/Comedienne's long career, or, you could reserve that honor for *The Munsters' Revenge*, the TV movie that brought Gwynne, Lewis and DeCarlo together again for the first, and last, time (and with good reason, it stunk!). At any rate, Ms. DeCarlo still turned up sporadically, her last major role being in 1993's *The Sorority House Murders*. When I saw Vincent Price give a lecture in 1983, he pointed out that the reason actors such as himself consented to appear in movies they knew were bad from the git-go was, simply, survival. Not just the "I've gotta eat" variety (though, that's important, too), but the need to stay in the race until you reach the finish line. The Munsters' Drag-Ula sportster has now taken Herman, Grandpa, and Lily to the end of the line. To us, all three were winners. They survived this world, and will thrive in the next.

KEN GIBSON - In the esteemed company of Midwestern Horror Hosts such as Ghoul Brother, # 1, Ghoulardi (nee Ernie Anderson), his successor, The Ghoul (Ron Sweed), Svengoolie (Jerry G. Bishop) and his successor, Son of Svengoolie (Richard Koz), now known as just "Svengoolie," the Quad Cities-based Horror Host, Vincent Hedges (Ken Gibson) stands out among his admittedly better-known peers in that he wasn't exactly a "Host." The real host of the *Acri Creature Features* show was, in actuality, the SPONSOR, Chuck Acri, who used the program as a venue to promote his home improvement business. A guy talking about aluminum siding during the breaks in various Horror films couldn't be considered particularly scary or funny (though Acri was nothing if not instantly likeable), and that's where Vincent Hedges came in. Hedges/Gibson would appear on Acri's show in pre-filmed comic shorts about the life of a modern-day vampire. Moderately long-haired, with near-Elvisian sideburns and Edwardian vampire attire, Vincent Hedges quickly became a favorite among viewers in parts of Iowa and Illinois, where the program aired. Even stranger than the setting in which Hedges appeared on the show was the fact that he spoke no dialogue in his vignettes, which drew heavily on the Silent Comedies of the 20s for inspiration. Somehow, the concept of a monster who didn't speak, coupled with a regular guy businessman who DID, worked. Gibson's reels were basically shot on location, though, naturally, he would emerge from a coffin, located on a studio set. Suspension of disbelief was frequently toyed with, as Hedges, inexplicably, had the power to walk about in daylight (though, I think I can explain it thusly: It cost more to create the illusion of night time, using filters, than to film in natural daylight). I, myself, never got to enjoy Vincent Hedges' exploits when he haunted TV screens in the 70s (and, again, in the early 80s, when Acri and Gibson returned to the small screen), as I was living in Kewanee, Illinois in the Early-to-Mid 70s, and you couldn't pick that show up without cable TV (then an exotic commodity), but, I had even better access to Hedges/Gibson. He lived not too far from my house, and his son was one of my best friends. Ken Gibson was probably THE biggest local celebrities in culture-starved Kewanee, even though a former Green Bay Packer and the man who built Evel Knievel's

bikes, at a time when Knievel only shared the world with Mohammed Ali, plus an eccentric former boxing champ from The 20's, also called Kewanee home. Ken wasn't like the OTHER adults I knew. He was the coolest grownup I'd ever met! He didn't seem to take himself very seriously at all, always ready with the jokes. His real life personality didn't seem too far removed from the character he played. Mainly, I remember him as a really nice man with a big heart. His favorite charity was The March of Dimes, and he hosted their Halloween Haunted House in Kewanee every year. This meant that he would round up several of his actor friends to play various monsters. The sets, costumes, and makeup were all top notch. The Haunted House would culminate with the infamous Dungeon of Terror. You would have to go through Vincent Hedges to get to the exit door. It wasn't easy, and it wasn't done for laughs! We weren't facing the comic vampire from the TV show, we were up against a ravenous beast-man who really didn't care if you knew his alter-ego, personally. It was the scariest part of the entire Haunted House. Gibson even presided over an all-monster BASEBALL TEAM that played in exhibition games for The March of Dimes. Even though he'd done much good, there were parents who seemed to think he wasn't a good influence on us kids (it was he who inspired me to work with The March of Dimes Haunted House when I was older). The proverbial wolfsbane hit the fan when Gibson did the unspeakable: He opened an after school club for the teens and pre-teens, located, appropriately, in a cellar. It was called "Vinnie's Hideaway." Of course, we kids were in Hog Heaven when we got a load of the joint: All the latest accouterments, including black light posters, a fully stocked bar (sodas only, of course), pinball, air hockey, and the newest innovation.... PONG! He even had a coffin set up in the lobby, to throw your coats in! For the first time, this was something we felt was ours. Parents weren't too keen on the idea of us younger kids consorting with the teenagers. AS IF that was going to happen. Nothing could have been more uncool for the older kids than to be caught talking to US. The two camps were definitely separate, and Mr. Gibson would have stepped in if things had gotten funky. Besides, I was more likely to have a real J.D. approach me at the movies or even The Y.M.C.A. Nevertheless, the villagers came, with their stakes, torches and pitchforks, and drove Vincent Hedges out of his rightful domain. Ours, too. I still think about that, quite often, in fact. Gibson eventually opened a respectable family restaurant under the same name, and got the dogs off his trail. It, too, went under in a short time. *The Acri Creature Features* show was still on TV through all this, though it eventually got cancelled. In the early 80s, as I'd stated earlier, the show was brought back by popular demand. Vincent Hedges remains undead with those who enjoyed the program, and with fans of the Horror Host genre itself. I'll always remember Ken Gibson as being the man who spread the joy of terror in my home town and throughout Iowa and Illinois, and as the man who gave me my first real hangout (and, the last one, for many years), and as the man who filled me in on the secret to good living, remember this: Growing up is overrated. Special Thanks to Kent Daluga (*Scary Monsters* magazine, original Chicago House of Monsters mob).

JEREMY SLATE - When you see Jeremy Slate on screens big or small, it all comes out to one thing, abbreviated, "B.M.F"! He was the baddest of the bad in the many Biker epics he starred in (overshadowing even Sonny Barger, real-life President of the Oakland Hell's Angels chapter, with whom Slater had become friends during the making of several AIP Biker classics), starting with the first important 60s Biker movie, "The Wild Angels," and going headlong into "Hell's Belles," "The Mini Skirt Mob," "Hells Angels '69" (which he also scripted), and, later, the documentary, "Hell's Angels Forever." His best-known Badass Biker role would have to be that of Daniel, Billy Jack's original nemesis, in "The Born Losers." I remember seeing it on the big screen when the picture was re-released after "Billy Jack," actually the second picture in Tom Laughlin's series of the same name, swept up at the box office. It was my 10th birthday. Kids our age should NOT have been watching a movie about a marauding gang of rapists, but Daniel was the bad guy we ALL loved to hate (besides, my Mom had also, inadvertently, taken my Brothers to see "Papillon" earlier). Slater's career went well beyond the Biker/Exploitation fare that was all the rage in the mid-to-late 60s (he also appeared as a ruthless pusher in "The Hooked Generation"). He started to work in television in the early 60s, looking every bit the tough guy countenance he would become famous for, though he was presented to the public as a hunky California beachcomber type. His appeal to the opposite sex was still decidedly on the rugged side (how many of his peers had broken noses, for one?). He was definitely more Vic Morrow than Tab Hunter. But, Slater didn't play a WWII Veteran on television, he WAS one in real life, serving with The Navy at the Invasion of Normandy. His first crack at television came with *The Aquanauts*, which flopped, but, there'd always be a place on TV for an actor who could portray brave heroes (he'd had some practice) and real stinker-villain types with equal aplomb. He would go on to appear on *Gunsmoke*, *Bewitched*, *Mission: Impossible*, *Wonder Woman* and, later, an ongoing role in *One Life To Live* which he held down for eight seasons. He also appeared opposite John Wayne in *Sons of Katie Elder* and *True Grit*, but, his real claim to fame, outside of his Biker Badguy roles, would have been appearing alongside Elvis in *G.I. Blues* and *Girls! Girls! Girls!*" The two became friends, and hung out together offscreen, which may have caused many people to believe Slater was one of Presley's bodyguards, to which he probably would've replied, "I'm Elvis' FRIEND, not his bitch!" Of course, protecting dignitaries was something Slater had already done, acting as part of a convoy that watched over FDR, Winston Churchill, and The King of Arabia, all en route to The Yalta Conference (he should have kicked Stalin's ass and saved us all a lot of grief). Slater continued to work in film, up until the 90s, appearing in already-obscure features such as *Dream Machine*, *Dead Pit*, *Goodnight, Sweet Marilyn*, and *Dead Lock*. *Psychotronic Video* #36 featured an amazing, no holds barred interview (to my knowledge, his last), written by Nelsen Basden. *Psychotronic Video* has folded as a magazine - bad pun, I know- but, survives on the internet. If you're a fan, I urge you to read the story of his incredible career and lifestyle. Copies of PV# 36 are still available from Psychotronic editor, Michael Weldon, at pvzine@intercom.net. Slater, who

usually appeared to be younger than he actually was, was eighty years old when he died, last November, from esophageal cancer. Yea, though he walked through the dark valley of the shadow of death, he feared no evil...Because he was the baddest motherfucker in the valley!!

FREDDY FENDER - Born Baldemar Huerta in San Benito, Texas (in The Rio Grande Valley), the former child farm laborer would go on to fame as Freddy Fender, but, not without going through a lot of changes before and after his initial rise to fame. Though it sounds like a movie cliché, the young Baldemar worked alongside older Black men who taught him The Blues. No doubt, Freddy already had the Blues. Still, though his hometown was impoverished, he was always quick to point out it was neither particularly violent, nor lacking a sense of community. Still, he knew the life he'd seen wasn't the one he wanted. He joined The Marines at 16, and began singing and playing guitar to entertain himself and his friends. Upon release, he began recording under a variety of psuedonyms: El Be-Bop Kid, Eddie Medina, and Scotty Wayne, finally settling on his now-famous stage name. Using the band name, "Eddie Con Los Shades," Fender recorded the raw rockin' 45, "No Esta Aqui"/"Acapulco Rock," and an LP featuring silhouettes of Archie ("Archi" in Mexico) and Veronica on the cover. The celebrated Mexican Comedian, Tin Tan, covered both sides of the single in one of his movies. The popular Mexican Rock n'' Roll combo, Los Hooligans, also covered both sides of the single, and another Eddie Con Los Shades track, "Dime Sime Vas a Ver" turned up on "Desperate Rock n'' Roll Volume 11." In 1957, he had his first hit with a Spanish version of "Don't Be Cruel" b/w "Ay Amor (Oh, Holy One)." He re-recorded "Oh, Holy One" some 30-plus years later with The Texas Tornados. Fender's life got turned completely upside down when he was sent to the notorious Angola State Penitentiary in Lousiana. Three joints, three years, three songs. Fender's limited musical output, while incarcerated, was released by the legendary Goldband label out of Louisiana (despite the way the state had treated him, Fender enjoyed incorporating Cajun and "Swamp Pop" themes into his own music). Eventually, he was paroled, a condition of which was that he was told to stay away from the music business for a while...he had limited success with singles like "Wasted Days and Wasted Nights." When The Sir Douglas Quintet recorded a version of it in 1969, Doug Sahm's preceding comment, "This is a song by the great Freddy Fender. This is for you, Freddy, wherever you are...," was an innocent remark. No one seemed to know where Freddy was. It turns out he was working as a mechanic, and had yet to resurface in the music world. In 1974, Huey P. Meaux (also The Sir Douglas Quintet's original producer) vowed to jumpstart Fender's career. Hits like "Before The Next Teardrop Falls," a remake of "Wasted Days," and a cover of Ivory Joe Hunter's "Since I Met You, Baby" cemented his reputation as one of Country Music's greatest stylists, possessed of one of the most beautiful voices in the genre. But, Freddy would never let himself be limited by the trappings of one style of music. He'd done Blues ("Born in Chicago"), R&B ("Get Out of My Life, Woman, "Ooh Poo Pah Doo"), and even great novelty songs like "Krazy Kat" with the same panache as his Country hits. He even wrote "Secret Love," the same number that was a smash for Doris Day (LaWanda Page had a go at it, too. "Last evening we were on Channel Four, and my secret's not a secret anymore!"). Such command of different styles brought him closer to the earlier advocate who could also not be bound to just one musical style, Doug Sahm. Doug got Freddy into the Rock venues where the two would perform with the likes of SDQ organist Augie Meyers, Jerry Jeff Walker, and even Roky Erickson. He continued having (lesser) hits, but, he was losing steam. Still, Robert Redford brought him in to co-star in his 1988 film, "Milagro Beanfield War." A little later, I heard Doug Sahm mention a new project he was cookin' up with Freddy at a Sir Douglas Quintet show. The Texas Tornados, comprised of Sahm, Fender, Augie Meyers, superstar Conjunto accordionist, Flaco Jiminez, and top-notch sidemen like Drummers Ernie Durawa and Mike Buck, plus, Bassist, Speedy Sparks and Louie and The Lovers/Sir Douglas Quintet guitarist, Louie Ortega. A winning combination all around, they won new fans to the fun stylings of Conjunto music without losing touch with the Country and Rock audiences, eventually winning a Grammy, an almost unprecedented feat for music so...honest (Note: The surviving Texas Tornados lineup recently performed at The Texas Music Awards, joined by Sam The Sham, during SBSW). The group released two outstanding albums, plus a third that isn't bad, just not as consistent as the other two. They also released a Spanish language version of their self-titled debut, and appeared at The Desi Awards (an award show for outstanding achievement in the Latin community), backing a spiritually contrite, but unrepentently rockin' Sam The Sham. The group nearly backed Roky Erickson at The Texas Music Awards, but an unrehearsed Erickson just smiled and waved to the crowd, before walking off. Their video for "Adios, Mexico" even got featured on *Beavis and Butthead*! The group went from strength to strength, and I saw, first hand, what made Fender a star in the eyes of his people. His voice was even better in person, and he exuded a charisma comparable to Elvis in his heyday. He also came on like a real good cat, and that's what I've been told he was, by people who knew him. My boy, Ted Roddy, ran into him once at Wal-Mart, where they were were both having keys made. As the years went on The Texas Tornados called it a day and Fender's health began to deteriorate. A few years back, he was waiting for a kidney donor. His daughter stepped forward, and his life was saved. But, later he was diagnosed with lung cancer. Still performing, but unable to maintain the pace onstage that he'd been used to, Fender faced the very real possibility that his days on Earth were numbered. Shortly after telling his wife that he'd seen a vision of Christ, which he took as a sign that the end was near, but that he needn't be afraid, cancer took his life, but not his legacy. Arguably the real Father of Latino Rock 'n' Roll, and truly the Mexican Elvis (not to take anything away from El Vez). Freddy Fender did more than he may have ever realized to bring the Mexican and American cultures together. He sang like an angel, and now, he is one.

RUTH BROWN - Ruth Brown, "The Queen of R&B" in the eyes and ears of many, is held in as high regard for her feisty personality as her jazzy, bluesy vocal phrasing. The original Crazy Sexy Cool, and nobody's fool. She enjoyed a long stretch of hits on Atlantic Records, whose President, the legendary Ahmet Ertegun (R.I.P), had been in competition with Capitol Records to secure a contract with Brown in the late forties. Ertegun signed Ruth Brown, who would help usher in The Golden Age of R&B, with Atlantic at the helm. Brown would become one of the label's biggest stars, and Ertegun earned a reputation as one of the greatest entrepreneurs in the history of American music. It was a classic "Win-Win-Win" situation. But, it didn't come easy. Ruth was booked into the Apollo, and, then, to start recording, but she and her manager, Blanche Calloway (Cab Calloway's sister), were involved in an automobile accident that left Ruth in the hospital for nine months. Upon recovering, Brown's attempts at recording Jazz-oriented ballads like her idols, Billie Holliday and Dinah Washington, reportedly fell short of the mark, even though she went on to use jazzy phrasings when she found her own thing. That, my friends, didn't take long. "Teardrops From My Eyes," a full-bodied, medium-tempo Blues, was the breakthrough hit, even though, by the ladies' own admission, it was the last of several tunes being pitched to her that she thought would make it. From there, she hit the Chitlin' Circuit with future husband, wailin' saxman, Willis "Gator Tail" Jackson (who also ran the gamut from R&B to jazz), recording great sides along the way, and utilizing great songwriters like Chuck Willis and Leiber and Stoller, but finding her signature song with "Mama, He Treats Your Daughter Mean." The song finds our gal overwrought with emotion over a seemingly cruel lover whose only crime is giving her too much lovin' (you can just see her nod and wink as the number moves along). The similarly themed "Love Contest" employs the whoops and moans of Gospel, but, of course, it's really SEX bringing on the moans! "Wild, Wild Young Men" shows a woman at the peak of sexual confidence, lovin' her some fun, but, bowing to none. It later spawned a great Rockabilly version by Johnny Carroll as "Wild, Wild Women," and even a strong 'Billy chick interpretation by closet rocker, Rose Maddox. "Hello Little Boy" is the closest thing to punk rock recorded before Elvis debuted at Sun. I wouldn't lie (not much). It carries on at a furious pace, with Ms. Brown shouting her lungs out, destroying everything in it's path. The inability of this totally uncommercial (re.-GENIUS!) side led to a temporary no-show at the top of the R&B charts, which was thwarted by " Mambo Baby" b/w "Someone Touched Me" (written by Ertegun, we're told). The latter was, once again, Gospel-like in delivery, this song is way too sexy to be played at a Sunday prayer meeting. In 1955, "Mama, He Treats Your Daughter Mean" was re-released, and Ruth made her television debut on *The Steve Allen Show*. "Mama" went on to sell 5 Million copies. The frantic "This Little Girl's Gone Rockin'" (written by Bobby Darin) cemented her status as an early Rock 'n' Roller, as did the patronage of an influential D.J. named Alan Freed, but, the hitmaking streak for Atlantic came to an end in 1960. Brown continued performing and recording, and maintained a stage personna that was, at once, both sassy and classy. She branched into acting, too. Surely, everyone remembers her outstanding performance as Motormouth Mabel in John Waters' *Hairspray*, but, do you remember her recurring role on the short-lived 70s sitcom, *Hello, Larry*? It's OK, neither do I, and I actually WATCHED the damned thing. She sustained a reputation on her live show. I got to see her, once, when she preceded John Lee Hooker (and followed Clarence Carter, whom I missed, somehow) at Bluesfest. I remember her set being moderately peppered with R&B material, but more focused on sultry, Jazz-tinged numbers, and, in her own words, "Belly-rubbin' thangs...We used to call these songs "Coffee Grinders!" When she took ill a few years ago, Ruth was forced to cancel an engagement at The Green Bay Festival. She resurfaced at The Viva Las Vegas Festival, last year, but, I heard her performance was truly sad. She had to perform in a wheelchair, which is one thing, but she also had to refer to a lyric sheet, and, even then, she had a tough time getting through her songs. It sounds as though she was not well enough to work, but tried her hardest to make her way through her set, a task that would have once been easy. We can find true sadness in her passing, which would be normal for her fans, or we can find joy in believing, somewhere, a new career is beginning, one that Ahmet Ertegun just had to be at from the beginning, just like he was the first time around.

AHMET ERTEGUN - Turkish-American Soccer enthusiast or genius American music industry mogul? Ahmet Ertegun was both. Though he excelled at finding new talent in the emerging R&B field of the late 40s and 50s, he carried the same intuitiveness over into 60s Soul and the Rock era of the Late 60s and 70s, and came up all aces every time. Atlantic Records might have supported a handful of artists who proved little more than tax write-offs, like any major label at the time, but, they were buried under the weight of so many heavy hitters, you'd need a

microscope to even find most of them, today. The last time I saw Ertegun on television, he spoke at such great length about soccer (he sold Atlantic in the 1967, but stayed on as chairman, buying The New York Cosmos Soccer team with part of the profits) and the political situation in Turkey. I thought he'd never get around to discussing his own brilliant music career. Ahmet decided, early on, that he was going to get in on the ground floor, and, if there wasn't a ground floor handy, he'd MAKE one. In postwar America, when the dreaded record ban (shellac, then used to make 78s, was in short supply during the war) was lifted, and the fields were rife for picking Jazz, Blues, and what would go on to be called Rhythm and Blues talent, but someone was needed to separate the wheat from the chaff, and Ertegun's keen sensibilities rarely failed him, nor did they fail to affect the course of American music. The fact that he was the Son of a top-ranking Turkish diplomat (who eventually became ambassador to the United States), and had seen more of the world by his teens than most people had in their lives, did not hurt him one bit. He had an epiphany as a child, when he saw Cab Calloway and Duke Ellington perform live. In a few years he would be hosting these, and other greats, in embassy-sponsored concert programs. Just after The War, he entered the music industry with a small record label, it eventually became known as Atlantic, with fellow Jazz buff Herb Abramson. Though the record ban was finally over, a strike by the American Federation of Musicians was about to hit. Atlantic managed to record enough material to score seminal hits with Sticks McGhee ("Drinkin' Wine, Spo-De-O-Dee") and Big Joe Turner ("Shake, Rattle n' Roll) before The Forties drew to a close. By the Early Fifties, the label was on a winning streak with Ruth Brown, The Clovers, and Ray Charles, who could have scored enough hits for the entire label (though Ahmet was the last to mourn, and the first to get down to business, when Charles left Atlantic for ABC). Writing or co-writing many of the label's hits, Ahmet was locked and loaded when Rock 'n' Roll began in earnest, though he reportedly passed on Elvis Presley, he already had The Coasters, The Drifters, Clyde McPhatter (late of The Drifters), LaVern Baker, and other artists who directly influenced Presley. Several years later, he worked the same kind of magic in the Soul field, with Wilson Pickett, Aretha Franklin. Solomon Burke, Percy Sledge, and others, while distributing the Stax label. Otis Redding called him "Omlette," the only artist to get away with such a gesture of disrespect, directed at Ertegun. Ray Charles probably could have pulled it off, as represented in the movie, *Ray*, but Ertegun was quick to point out that no one called him "Omlette" but Otis Redding. In time, Atlantic, under Ertegun's guidance, signed some of the biggest sellers in Rock history, including Led Zeppelin, Yes, Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young (Ahmet persuaded Neil Young to join what would prove to be an outfit licensed to print money, but, unable to retain stability), Iron Butterfly, and even Black Oak Arkansas (Jim Dandy stated, in a WGN radio interview, that it was in an arranged phone call from Elvis Presley, himself, that he was instructed to record a cover version of LaVern Baker's Atlantic smash, "Jim Dandy." The resulting single was as ubiquitous as television for a while). BUT, the greatest coup of all was securing the Rolling Stones' contract, which wasn't even rumored to be open to negotiations by 1970, when, in fact, Decca was about to let them go, and Ahmet Ertegun was one of the only ones privvy to that priceless bit of imagination. Jagger approached him personally, having always enjoyed the man's company, and shared love for Blues, Soul and R&B. The signing, appropriately enough, took place at a Chuck Berry show at The Whisky-A-Go-Go. Jagger ended up having to rouse a sleeping Ertegun to secure his John Hancock. Overseeing the formation of Rolling Stones Records, Ahmet could afford The Stones the artistic freedom they needed. With "Sticky Fingers" and "Exile on Main Street" leading the way, two records they've arguably never topped, much less equaled, though they never really did a bad or truly mediocre LP in The 70s (unless you want to count "Black and Blue," which is worth owning just for the Soulful, Jazzy phrasing on "Melody," co-written by Billy Preston, a tune that Ahmet probably dug deep). Ertegun continued in the industry well into the 80s and 90s, either acting as the very Diplomat he could have been, had he followed in his Father's footsteps (he maintained that he could have gone on to become King of Turkey, and who are we to dispute that claim? He was indeed a King, but never a turkey), or helping other labels attain the same levels of success he already had. He came on as sincere, genuine, and sharp as a tack, even in later years. He was well known for being just as much at home in High Society gatherings, or at a juke joint at the corner of switchblade and crackpipe. He seemed to be on the pulse of all people, all races, and all walks of life. His was a talent that may have been cultivated from his early years as a globetrotting Ambassador's son, but could not have been bought or sold, nor acquired through a first rate education. We owe this man. Goddamn, we owe him BIG.

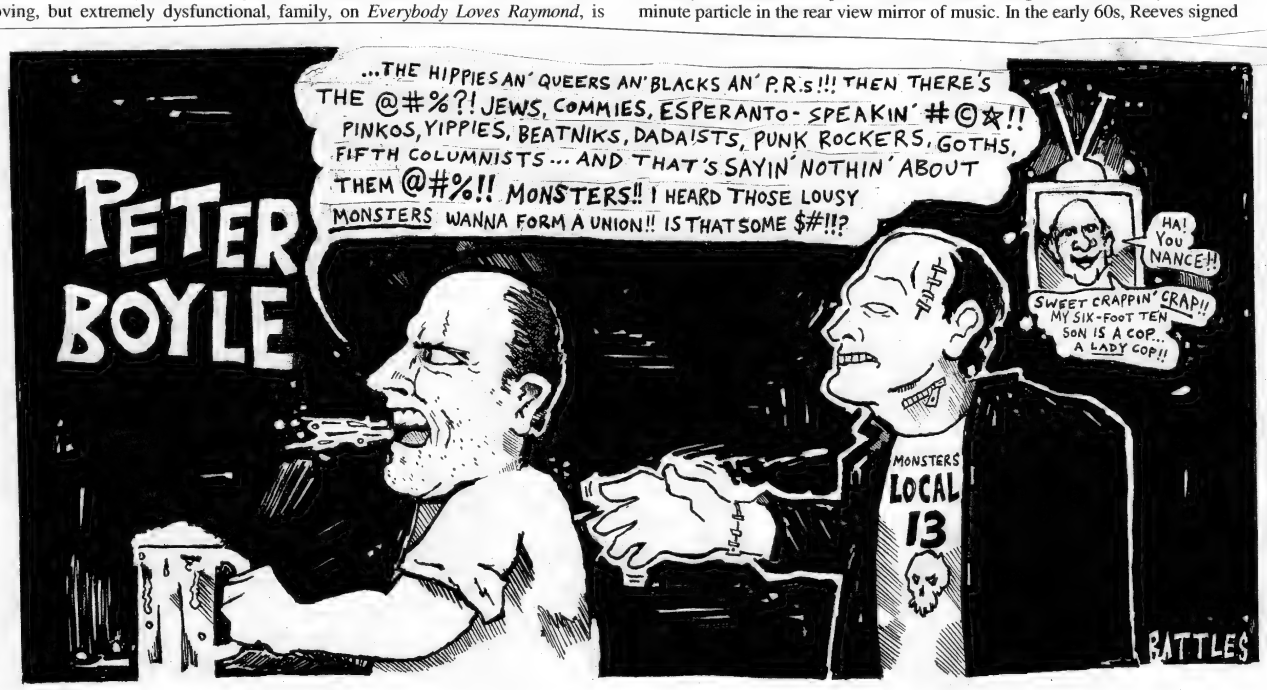
SANDY WEST - Though they're sometimes credited as being the first all-female Rock group, The Runaways were preceded by The Luv'd Ones, Feminine Complex, Pleasure Seekers, Daughters of Eve, Belles, Las Mosquitas, Two of Clubs, Fanny, Isis, and others. Conceived by a Svengali, the notorious producer/writer/scenester and recording artist in his own right, Kim Fowley, who believed that an all-teenage girl band could really be the next big thing, the Runaways were met with as much confusion and resistance as The New York Dolls had run into before ultimately throwing in the towel, right around the same time. Fowley was fresh from an abortive, though admirable, attempt to jump-start a (briefly) reformed Blue Cheer's career. He placed an ad, outlining his plan for World Rock Domination, in *Bomp!* magazine, finally deciding on drummer, Sandy West, guitarist Joan Jett, and bassist Michael Steele (a bit of Alice Cooper in reverse. She's probably better known as Micki Steele) as the core group. Also on hand was songwriter Kari Krome. The trio immediately went to work on a demo, comprising group, Krome and Fowley originals, plus Mitch Ryder and Detroit's heavy version of The Velvet Underground's "Rock n'' Roll," and songs the band could surely play in their sleep, regardless of the fact that they'd been playing together for only five days, like "Wild Thing" and "All Right Now" by Free. For a band that had barely passed "Go," the demos, released in 1994 as "Born To Be Bad," actually hold up pretty well today. After several lineup changes, a five piece lineup was agreed upon. Steele, by now, was out of the picture (though she would later go on to live out the dream of being in a chart-topping all- female band by joining The Bangles), as was her first replacement, Peggy Foster. Jett was joined on guitar by Lita Ford (who didn't like Fowley from the word "go," a sentiment the others would go on to share. Lita had to be persuaded not to quit for a second time), Jackie Fox would take over on bass, and a lead singer, Cherie Curie, was discovered at an underaged disco (how appropo!). Though all the members were still in their teens, in prepunk Los Angeles, it was not very difficult to get into the clubs, especially if you were an attractive young lady (or, a pretty young boy, for that matter). Drink, drugs and debauchery were already second nature to kids who probably had yet to even obtain drivers licenses. By 1975, the youth of L.A. was going to Hell in a handbasket, but they still didn't have a voice of their own. The Runaways, propelled by West's powerful drumming (it's doubtful that too many compliments tossed her way were followed by, "for a girl!") and under Fowley's humiliating Drill Sarge direction, seemed primed to conquer The World. Though they did tour extensively throughout The U.S. and Western Europe, the only country that really seemed to get it was Japan. A strong live LP and a TV documentary (which turns up as a bootleg, but, has yet to see an official release) of the Japanese tour show a band at the peak of their powers, basking in the adulation of their biggest fans. But, all was not well in Paradise. After a few fine LPs, Curie, left the band, as did Fox. Joan Jett took on double duties as guitarist and singer, and, between she and Lita Ford, they continued to write and record good material (though the one about The Russians using a weather machine to take over The U.S. makes me laugh and scratch my head at the same time), but, without Curie, the band had lost some of it's sex appeal (though new bassist, Vicki Blue was very easy on the eyes). On an upcoming tour, supporting The Ramones (hot on the heels of "Rocket To Russia"), requests for the original band's signature song, "Cherry Bomb," and inquiries about Cherie's whereabouts were met with comments like, "We kicked the blonde bitch outta the band!." Dee Dee Ramone said, "The thing about The Runaways is, they try to act like they have cocks, and they ain't GOT cocks!," and even Ari Upp, from The Slits, said, "The Runaways tried, but, they were so awful!" The group soldiered on, regardless of demand, finally parting ways with Fowley, and making plans for a full-length film called "Mama Weer All Crazee Now," based on their cover version of the Slade classic. The Runaways fell apart before the film could be completed, but, Joan Jett honored the contract by appearing with hired actresses instead of the band...(though unreleased, Jett's footage, without audio, is included in the film *DuBeateo*). Upon The band's dissolution, Sandy played drums with Lita Ford for a while, eventually branching out on her own with The Sandy West Band, and regrouping with Cherie Curie and Vicki Blue (Jake saw them perform in L.A. with myriads of young Japanese femme rockers, every one of them elated to be performing with SOME of The Runaways. I saw the three of them on TV, and though they didn't play any music, they all LOOKED great). Around this time, Lita Ford and Joan Jett resolved an ancient conflict, and released a version of "Cherry Bomb" together. All of this led, naturally, to rumors of a full-fledged Runaways reunion. I met a former member of a well-known punk band who told me he was working on that very thing. It probably could have happened, but, it didn't. Sandy was diagnosed with Lung Cancer in 2006, and, after a courageous fight, she was taken, one might say, mercifully. A memorial show was held at The Knitting Factory with the likes of Cherie Curie, The Bangles (now playing minus Michael/Micki Steele), The Adolescents, Michael Des Barres, The Donnas (arguably the most successful band to pattern themselves after The Runaways), White Flag, and Carmine and Vinnie Appice. The respect Sandy and The Runaways weren't always afforded in their time is surely theirs, now. Female rockers of every stripe owe them a debt, even though their appeal goes beyond gender.

PETER BOYLE - Carlos Mencia called Peter Boyle "The most curmudgeonly man in show business" during one of his special guest appearances on "Mind of Mencia." About ten years ago, Boyle went on a tirade, trying to find the location of his audition for the part of Frank, the always-agitated Dad on *Everybody Loves Raymond*. It was plain by his (justifiable) display of anger that Boyle had found a new job, and the studio had found their "Frank." He wasn't even asked to read

any dialogue. People who knew him well said he was really nothing like Frank, but, the reality of it was, he had to fight typecasting for years. This resulted in some interesting twists and turns in his career. Boyle literally had show business in his blood. His Father, Peter Boyle, Sr., was an early television pioneer, hosting Western and kiddie programs in the Boyle's home of Philadelphia. Being from an Irish Catholic family, the younger Boyle attended a Catholic High School, then entered a monastic school as a novice. He began to question the order, and eventually dropped out. Boyle studied under the celebrated German acting coach, Uta Hagen (I could have, too, if I'd had money to burn when I was dabbling in Theatre), and toured with Neil Simon's "The Odd Couple" as Murray The Cop. He left the company in Chicago, where he joined The Second City. *Joe* was Boyle's first starring role in a motion picture (it was also Susan Sarandon's debut). Joe, the perpetually pissed-off, racist, upper class AND hippie-hating construction worker, forms an unlikely alliance with a wealthy man who's killed his daughter's (Sarandon) weasely dope pusher boyfriend. The two men, acting undercover, end up learning the virtues of pot smoking and "Free Love," but, then, Joe goes on a killing spree, showing the other side of the "Peace and Love" coin as effectively as *Gimme Shelter* had. Though his performance was celebrated, with good reason, many people were left with the wrong idea about what kind of man Peter Boyle really was. In reality, Boyle had befriended Jane Fonda, who'd begun a second career in radical political activism. He worked with Fonda, Donald Sutherland, Country Joe MacDonald and others on a tour of military bases, urging support for the Anti-Vietnam War movement. A film was made about the tour, but, Boyle's appearance was taken out. Boyle was so deeply moved, in a negative sense, by people looking to "Joe" as a role model, that he refused the lead in "The French Connection," and other roles that he thought were promoting violence and/or racism. His next big break, and a rapid turnaround for his career, came with Mel Brooks' Horror-Comedy masterpiece, "Young Frankenstein," a loving tribute to the Universal "Frankenstein" films (nearly every one is referenced in some kind of way). Boyle's performance as The Monster combines the childlike quality and the pathos of Karloff's original with a rapid fire comic sensibility, proving, once and for all, that this was a versatile actor, not one to be pigeonholed. While still in monster makeup, Peter was introduced to his future wife, *Rolling Stone* reporter, Lorrain Alterman, on the movie set. Boyle's good friend, John Lennon, served as best man at their wedding, further proof that Peter and "Joe" couldn't be any more dissimilar. Like his father, Peter moved into television, hosting *Saturday Night Live* twice. In his first appearance, Boyle and John Belushi performed the classic skit, "Duelling Brandos," in which the two took turns rattling off Marlon Brando dialogue (In "Wild One" attire) to the strains of "Duelling Banjos." The highly acclaimed movie roles kept coming, in pictures like "The Candidate," "Tail Gunner Joe" (about Joseph McCarthy and the Communist Witch Hunts of The 50s), "Taxi Driver" and "Hardcore." His career was temporarily cut short when a stroke rendered him speechless for six months. Upon his recovery, he appeared in several mainstream films, like the "Santa Clause" series, "Dr. Dolittle," "The Shadow", and further work on Television, making appearances on "Lois and Clark," "The Single Guy," the aforementioned "Mind of Mencia," an Emmy-winning guest spot on "The X- Files," and the role that one might argue Peter Boyle was born to play. The temperamental ballbuster, Frank Barone, head of a loving, but extremely dysfunctional, family, on *Everybody Loves Raymond*, is either the Dad you're glad you never had, or a bit too much like your real-life Dad, though you love him, anyway. In either case, he got the lion's share of the laughs, and even seemed to have the best lines written just for him. Nevertheless, every actor on the "Raymond" front line of recieved an Emmy. Everyone but Peter Boyle. In their yearly Halloween episodes (most notably, the one where Frank inadvertently gives kids condoms instead of candy!), Boyle always wore a Frankenstein costume of some sort, in homage to "Young Frankenstein." On the show Frank (short for "Frankenstein"?) and his wife, Marie, brought back the joys of knock down, drag out TV fights, on a level comparable to *The Honeymooners* or *The Bickersons*. For that, I thank them. Peter Boyle died from complications attributed to bone marrow cancer and heart disease. We know that he went straight to Heaven, because there's no way in Hell The Devil wants to fuck with Frank.

ART WOOD -Art Wood should be remembered best, today, as one of The UK's finest purveyors of gritty R&B and proto-Freakbeat Rock 'n' Roll, and frontman for one of the most talented collectives in the Mod/Soul genre. As it stands, his biggest claim to fame, in The U.S., at least, is that he was Ron Wood's brother. Nothing wrong with that, at least he's remembered more fondly, today, than Chris Jagger or Mike McGear (both of whom are still living). The appropriately named Artwoods evolved out of Red Bludd's Bluesicians, formed in 1963, and named for bassist, Red Bludd (nee Don Wilson). The band also featured the accomplished keyboard stylings of one Jon Lord, who'd later find fame with Deep Purple. With Bludd/Wilson's departure, Wood took the reins and became the focal point of the group. He'd learned the art of being a powerful frontman without diminishing the effect of such powerful accompanists by singing with Alexis Korner's Blues Incorporated, the group that, along with John Mayall's early Bluesbreakers, formed the basis of The British Blues scene. The Artwoods released several strong singles, and an LP, the much sought after "Art Gallery," but would prove to be more popular as a "Live" attraction than in terms of chart success. The changes in the music scene hit them hard. Despite the pre-Hard Rock heaviness of their musicianship, which would suggest they could have easily competed in the Psychedelic years (they tried to, renaming themselves The St. Valentine's Day Massacre, but, no go), Art Wood and company were deemed passé in a few short years. Lord went on to you-know-who, but, before he did, he turned up in The Flowerpot Men, who scored a UK hit, the admittedly very lightweight "Let's All Go To San Francisco." Drummer, Keef Hartley, would go on to greater fame in John Mayall's band, and Wood would go in and out of the public consciousness, eventually turning up as a regular performer at The Eel Pie Club by the 90s. Reportedly, hard living had caught up with him by then, but I only heard praise from the people that knew him. Plans for a live U.S. appearance stiffed, but, that matters little, now that he's part of everything.

DEL REEVES - Best known for his "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" formula for near-Rockabilly, novelty Country hits, propelled by a big, boss, guitar twang and his own resonant, happy go-lucky vocals. Reeves started out doing Rockabilly sides for Capitol Records in the fifties, without much luck, though certainly not for lack of high quality. He found his niche a little later on, in the sixties, doing what one might call "Pompadour Country," along with artists like Conway Twitty, Bob Luman, and late 60s Jerry Lee Lewis. Del was committed to Country, but could still put The Rock into it long after Rockabilly was just a minute particle in the rear view mirror of music. In the early 60s, Reeves signed



with United Artists records, and this is where the fun begins...his first two smash hits, "The Girl on The Billboard" and "The Belles of Southern Belle" smack of nudge, nudge, wink, wink horniness, and became a genre almost entirely unto themselves, known as "Girl-watching songs" (In these P.C. times, however, they'd probably be called "Stalker songs" by some killjoys, but THAT genre would encompass everything from "On The Street Where You Live" to "One Way Or Another", but, not Reeve's hilarious "I'm gonna hug her gonna kiss her gonna hug her gonna kiss her" song specialties). As effective as these songs, and his magnum opus, "Women Do Funny Things To Me," all accentuated with his trademark, "Doodle-Doodle Doo", are on their own, you've got to see Del's performances in *Las Vegas Hillbillies* (with Jayne Mansfield and Mamie Van Doren, and the more cool-headed, but, obviously enthralled, Ferlin Husky, and enough Country stars to fill The Ryman) and For*ty Acre Feud* (In which Reeves sings and acts alongside Husky, who plays himself AND Del's best friend. The funniest part is where Husky has to follow himself, singing. Del Reeves goes, "You git up and show thet Ferlin Husky he's ain't got nuthin' on you!!!"). Even lip synch haters have to admit Reeves does as much with his eyes, his facial expression, and his body language to get his point across (in a manner comparable to Bobby Rush's live act, today), as he did on the records themselves. He continued cutting his own hits, as well as writing songs with his wife for the likes of Rose Maddox, Roy Drusky and Carl Smith. His own "Looking At The World Through a Windshield" became a Trucker's anthem, and "Good Time Charlie's" became his signature song. In the early 70s, he recorded a series of duets with Bobbie Goldsboro (I'd like to see him trying to conceal his horniness beside HER on video, even though it was really just an act, and Del was a happily married man) and Penny DeHaven. Del joined The Grand Ole Opry in 1966, and worked with them at The Ryman, and as part of package tours. I had the chance to see him (and George Jones, Brenda Lee, Willie Nelson, Porter Waggoner, and practically everyone else still living) when I was in Nashville, but no one in my family wanted to go, and I couldn't break away from my party. I love my family, but, that was a Doodle-Doodle DON'T. When Variety shows and live Country programs were all the rage, Reeves got in on the action with his own TV show, *Del Reeves' Country Carnival*. He later recorded duet LPs with Billie Joe Spears, and finally became a musical executive, still recording sporadically. He played a large part, it turns out, in getting Billy Ray Cyrus's career off the ground (and, for that, we'll forgive him). He continued performing with The Opry until 2002. His attempts at ballads, like "The Best Is Yet To Come," were well-meaning, but, somehow, lacked the substance of his infectious novelty numbers or even his effective celebrity impersonations (Bob Luman incorporated the same schtick into his act). At any rate, he was long overdue for a comeback, but, much like Luman, he ran out of time. His mission in life was making people happy, and, I hope, in so doing, this brought him some happiness, too. Del, "Doodle, Doodle, Doo " means we love you!

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it from one dimension into another, always the conductor... "AHHHHHLLL AABOOOOWWAAARRDD...THE NIGHT TRAIN!!!! MIAMI, FLORIDA!! ATLANTA, GEORGIA!!." Of course, Brown went from strength to strength with smash singles like "Papa's Got a Brand New Bag," "I Got You (I Feel Good)," and "Ain't That a Groove", but, he didn't have the patience to merely keep up with the times, he had to DEFINE them. "In 1967, This was THE SOUND." Funk, as we know it today, began with "Cold Sweat" (now, I know some of these cats with their $1000 45s might try to tell you otherwise), and flourished with songs like "I Can't Stand Myself (When You Touch Me)" (Which was recorded, remarkably enough, with white studio musicians!). It was, indisputably, "A James Brown Creation." With this new sound came a new attitude, a Black consciousness that was carefully constructed, by Brown, so as not be interpreted as anti-white (he even read Mohammed Ali the riot act for slamming the white man, saying, "The white man buys my records! What you got to say about that?!"), but as a call to his people to take stock in themselves, start businesses, and to strive for the education that he, himself, never had. Songs like "I Don't Want Nobody To Give Me Nothing (Open Up The Door, I'll Get It Myself)," and, of course, "Say It Loud (I'm Black and I'm Proud)," were not calls to violent revolution, but the message was clear, "We can't quit until we've had our share." Brown's pleas for nonviolent solutions were not ignored. When Martin Luther King was assassinated, a James Brown concert in Boston would have (understandably) been cancelled, had it not been for Brown's idea to televise the show, and urge people to stay inside and watch the concert at home. There was significantly less violence in Boston that night than in probably any major city that night. Nevertheless, people who grew up on the James Brown of the 80s and 90s (still a fantastic performer, but, hopelessly out of touch) could be forgiven for not realizing how powerful and influential the man was in his prime. Of course, the hits kept on coming into the 70s, with a live show that was still a force to be reckoned with, as evidenced on the "Revolution Of The Mind" and "Love Power Peace" live albums, both featuring Bootsy and Catfish Collins, later with the P-Funk Mob. The French TV broadcast the latter was derived from still exists on video, but, has yet to see a legal release. While SEX Consciousness found it's way into the mix with the immortal "Sex Machine" "Hot Pants," etc., Black Consciousness themes like "Soul Power" and the underrated "Get Up, Get Into It, Get Involved" ("Don't raise your hand, expect me to call you my man. Don't raise your hand, expect me to say, "There goes my man!") still put the point over. From there, Brown's career would become a series of comebacks. Attempts to cross over into the Disco and Rap markets weren't taken very seriously by fans, though he still had some hits left in him. An Early-80s collaboration with Afrika Bambataa didn't really bring James Brown back on the dance floors in a big way, but, his songs were being sampled on so many Rap and Hip-Hop tracks, it almost didn't matter. Of course, "Living in America," from "Rocky V," put him back on TVs and radios all over the world, but it took several years to score another major hit, "I'm Real," from an album recorded with hip hop vocal group, Full Force. When the hits had stopped coming, Brown could always fall back on his greatest strength: his live show. He continued to demand the most from his musicians, and from himself. While his live set hardly varied from the late 70s to the recent past, he still lived up to his rep as "The Hardest Working Man in Showbiz." I had the pleasure of seeing him live up to that title, twice. The first time was at the now-notorious "Comeback Show," held at Soldiers' Field in July, 1991, upon Brown's release from prison (surely, I can skip that, as most of you know what happened). Pervis Spann, owner of Chicago's only Black-owned radio station, WVON, and promoter of the event, promised a supporting bill worthy of a King, and sure to bring in tens of thousands: Aretha Franklin, Little Richard, Al Green, Johnnie Taylor, and THEN some. What we got was a revamped Chi-Lites, Artie "Blues Boy" White (who Put in an overly long set, which Dan Epstein recalls as having been the same set, TWICE!), and Gene Chandler (performing just three songs, Karaoke-style, to a prerecorded backing, which was STILL the best performance of the three!). The audience, surely not even ten thousand strong, due to insufficient promotion, and a noble, if foolhardy, move to limit most of the sponsorship to local, Black, small businesses (I, for one, bought my ticket at Solomon's Fish Market!). We were never, once, told what the holdout was with the promised acts, nor if any of them were still playing. Needless to say, people were becoming furious, and an appearance by Al Sharpton, ostensibly to inform the audience that James Brown would still be performing (if nobody else), was met with a barrage of "boos" from the largely Black audience. Suddenly, James Brown appeared. The disappointment of the previous several hours suddenly meant nothing as Brown poured out bucketsfull of sweat, still moving as no one else could, still shrieking and shouting in tones that could have been heard all the way to Midway Airport. Even his stage clothes were relatively tasteful! Not very long into this greatest hits package, Brown had the crowd in the palm of his hand, screaming for more, and MORE is what he gave them. The climax of his act came when, in a true fit of inspiration, James Brown jumped off the stage, down to The Chicago Bears' playing field (the fans had been forbidden to go anywhere NEAR the sacred astroturf). Once he made his way down, sometimes he danced, sometimes he clowned, but, you can bet, you hadn't seen nothin' yet, until you seen him do THE JAMES BROWN!!! HAAAAAAAAAAAUUUUUUGGGGGHHH!!!!! When it all was over, I no longer felt cheated. A lawsuit placed against Pervis Spann was settled when Spann offered a substantial refund to anyone who'd mail him their original concert ticket (We'd been given our tickets back, intact, upon entrance). I couldn't do it, partly because I still felt I'd got my money's worth from James Brown, but, mainly, because the ticket itself looked SO kickass, like a 70s Rock concert ticket, two shades of pink with shiny, perforated, black lettering, and speckles of multicolored glitter. It SHOULD have read " Thin Lizzy with UFO, 1978." The second time I saw James Brown, a few years later, went far more smoothly, but under circumstances nearly as bizarre as the first...My friend, Patrick, had found out about a James Brown concert at The Arie Crown Theatre (site of The Rolling Stones' first Chicago appearance, and a considerably more intimate venue than Soldiers Field) with a peculiar twist. It seems James Brown was endorsing a new cologne, and, if you bought a bottle of said cologne, you'd be given two complimentary tickets to his upcoming concert. The only catch was, you wouldn't know where your seats were until the night of the show. We decided to go in on the deal, and our seats were nearly perfect, center stage, not too far back. After a short, unbelievably homoerotic promotional film for the cologne (set to "It's a Man's, Man's, Man's, Man's World"), James Brown hit the stage in even better form than the previous concert. Not only was he at the peak of his talents (for the 90s, I mean, not The 60s), singing and dancing up a storm, and still eschewing the tacky "Living in America" threads. There were a few surprises, too, like James Brown making with one of his trademark fiery organ solos, and leading the band in a "Jumpin' Jive" style instrumental, in which he danced like Cab Calloway. An exceptional light show was employed, too, with bright colored, frequently psychedelic patterns bouncing off Brown's body with every signature move, then going out into the audience. Not that he needed all the bells and whistles, but they did enhance what was already an exceptional performance. Which is, no doubt, what he's giving 'em, now, on a greater stage. The world will miss James Brown, it's no secret, but his presence will always be felt, and that, my friends, is no secret, either. "Shake hands with your best friend...You may never, never see him again."-"May Be The Last Time," James Brown.

ENDNOTES: First, let me begin by saying that I realize there were a few errors and oversights in my Syd Barrett piece last issue. I'm very much aware that I misspelled "Barrett" in the illustration. It was well past the 11th hour when I completed the drawing, and, I, for one, WAS losing sleep on it, literally, as it had to go to press immediately. Thank you for understanding. In other trivial news, Dan Epstein, L.A. music writer and sometimes *Roctober* scribe (AND Lava Sutra alum. Dig the new Lava Sutra myspace! BOLD!), pointed out to me that it's widely believed that Syd came up with "Interstellar Overdrive" by deconstructing the riff to Love's "My Little Red Book," adding that it might have been the sum total of Arthur Lee's influence on Barrett. I had read this, too, but, in a recently unearthed 1973 interview with the latter day Floyd (which appeared in *Mojo Classic*), Rick Wright tells Connor McKnight that Syd arrived at "Overdrive" by cross-pollinating "A track from Love's first album" with the theme from *Steptoe and Son* (the beloved, and hilarious, British comedy that inspired our own beloved, and hilarious, *Sanford and Son*). Wright was quick to point out, however, that the early Floyd weren't really listening to Love at the time. *Mojo* magazine also recently stated that the 1972 recordings credited to the late Steve Peregrine Took (Tyrannosaurus Rex, Shagrat, early Pink Fairies), and featuring Pink Fairies' stalwarts Larry Wallis, Duncan Sanderson, Mick Wayne and Twink (fancy that), did indeed, as previously implied, include Syd Barrett on occasional guitar. The article also implores readers not to bother with the CD culled from these sessions (released on Cleopatra in 1995, and, possibly, re-released since then) but, fans of Twink's "Think Pink" LP, The Pink Fairies' first album, or even Syd Barrett's John Peel sessions, might dig this for what it is, basically a home recording with a revolving door policy. It's interesting late-period British Psych, despite the off the cuff nature of the recording itself. **ALSO:** After writing his eulogy, I found out that my friend, the recently departed Sterno, began life as Paul Matthew Baumann. His real name was widely unknown until recently. The two gatherings held in his memory (there was no funeral service, and no official wake, as per Baumann's wishes) were very emotional. Many recollections of Sterno at the second gathering brought laughter, but the reality of the situation also brought tears. Wrapping things up was a New Orleans styled funeral march with a brass band (Sterno was a great enthusiast of N'Orlins culture), and neighbors coming out of their homes to be showered with Mardi Gras beads! It was fun, it was sweet, lively, and vibrant, much like Sterno/Baumann, himself. **SPAWNINGS:** Please excuse what might have looked like I didn't know the gender of Jake and Jackie's new baby, AFTER he was born! It was a typo, pure and simple, as the issue went to press shortly after his Noble self was born. Of course, he HAS turned out to be just as cute as I'd predicted, but one didn't have to be Nostradamus to figure THAT out! Speaking of which, our great friends, Mike Stax and Anja Stax-Dixson of *Ugly Things* and Loons fame and acclaim also had a baby boy right around the time our last issue hit the stands. His name is Phillip, and he's no Ugly Thing! Anyway, Bruce Ciero (former editor of *Bad Trip* magazine, and former, and future, member of soon-to-reform Atlanta punkers, The Bastards, who once headlined over some chumpass band called The Black

Crowes) and his bride-to-be, Dana, are now the proud parents of a beautiful baby girl, Mimi. Dana informs me that Bruce assisted greatly with the child's birth, even cutting the umbilical cord (Bruce, just tell your Uncles that IS acting like a man. Little in-joke, there, folks). Chris Connelly of (Ministry, Revolting Cocks, Pigface, and solo artist), and his wife, Shayna, did, in fact, have a little BAIRN, recently, a Son, named Angus ('Tis a MANLY name, but, he's not eating haggis just yet). My good friend, Bob Lowey and his wife, Anna, recently had a lovely addition to their household, Victoria, also known as 'Princess Goo Goo," and sometimes just "She Who Must Be Obeyed." Jim Heath, aka The Reverend Horton Heat, has informed me that he's going to be the father for the third time. RHH Bassist, Jim "Jimbo" Wallace (all Jims are Jimbos in Texas) also recently had an addition to his family. Congratulations to all the proud new parents. **FRIENDS ON THE MEND:** Gary "Elvis" Scheppers (King of The Chicago Soundmen) has returned to the boards. My good buddy, Earl Carter, of The Riptones and The Buzzards (who, incidentally, also recently married his longtime sweetheart, Ari. Anyone who knows her thinks of her as a sweetheart. Congratulations, kids, you're so gosh-darned cute!) is doing better all the time, and had returned to playing Bluegrass with his brother (it's practically mandatory that Bluegrass acts consist of at least two Brothers). My longtime friend, Bill Bulinski, of the legendary Electras (of "Dirty Old Man," "Soul Searchin'" and "Action Woman" fame and acclaim) and the also legendary, still-active, Greaseballs (Chicago's Kings, and Queen, of the Surf/Link Wray guitar stylings), though he's lived in the woods for years, is now OUT of the woods, as a manner of speaking. Logistics have kept the "Classic" lineup from performing for over 10 years, though they've recorded three CDs of new material. Bill recently struck up a friendship with fellow Minnesota resident, Gary Burger of the monks (I introduced the two over the telephone a few years back), and Gary says The Greaseballs' CD is now his favorite driving music! **Bad News (that Didn't Travel So Fast):** It took about a month for the word to get around, but, by now, most of you have heard about our great friend, Question Mark, losing his home, all of his possessions, and several of his pets in a devastating house fire. Fortunately, neither Question Mark, his manager, LuVern, nor LuVern's wife, both of whom live with Question Mark, were injured. Benefits have been held in New York, Detroit, San Francisco, St. Louis and other cities, and a successful benefit show was just held in Chicago, featuring a phenomenal set by ? and The Mysterians. If you'd like to help Question Mark directly, you can do so by sending a check, clothes, toiletries, household items, memorabilia or recordings (If you have any to give) to: Question Mark, P.O. Box 96, Clio, Michigan, 48420 (checks MUST be made out to "Question Mark," that's his legal name). Paypal donations may be made at QUESTIONMARKDONATIONS@MSN.COM **The Bad News First, Then The Good...**Legendary Honest Music band, Deadmoon, have called it quits, after a tenure of some 20 years. Many fans are extremely bummed out, but, founding members, Fred and Toody Cole, are at work on a new project, with a female drummer. It's not official. They're just testing the waters...**And, Now, Just Good News...**The legendary rulers of the Dallas/Ft.Worth-area Punk rock roost, The Nervebreakers, have just announced plans for a new studio long player, comprised of original tunes from back in the day that the band never got around to recording in the 70s and early 80s. Spirits are running high about this project, now in the works, for the band as well as their friends and fans. No talk of live gigs has transpired, yet, that I know of, but, it's only a matter of time before the offers start coming in. If you're not that familiar with The Nervebreakers, don't judge by the humorless, rhythm-free, adolescent temper tantrum punk had become by the early 80s, when they were wrapping things up. These guys were already seasoned players by the mid-70s, when they began, in earnest. They pulled just as readily from Country, Rockabilly, Mod, Garage, Bubblegum and Psych as they did from The Ramones and The Sex Pistols (both of whom they opened for, not to mention The Clash and Roky Erickson, whom they backed, twice). They were, and will be, nothing if not diverse. Their taste in covers is staggering, and, as songwriters, they produced a plethora of songs that still hold up today. Go to www.nervebreakers.com for further evidence. While you're there, check out "Erin's Texas Punk Junk" link, then watch this space for further news on the upcoming release ! **This just in:** My good friends, Bob and Anna Loewy, were married at City Hall, but assure me there'll still be a party. You think I'm a kidder? Here's a man who took his new bride, a former Hawaii resident, to NEW JERSEY! But, only to see her family. This wasn't the honeymoon. And parts of Jersey are very nice. My good friend for, well, precisely half my life, Lorna Hicks, was the drummer for The Peyote Cowboys (she also sang the most beautiful version of "The Porpoise Song"). She later gave up a lot of her spare time to look after Roky Erickson at a time when he was arguably at his worst (THEM DAYS ARE GONE FOREVER!!). She also has the distinction amongst my younger friends of having seen Elvis THREE TIMES. Anyway, she and her fiancee, John Branciforte, have announced their recent marriage. I chanced to see the couple over the summer, before they'd announced their engagement, and I could tell it wouldn't be very long. I think all those cartoon Valentine hearts they left in their wake were a tip-off for me. **Special Dedication:** Evelyn "Lil' Nana" Sorenson, my good friend, Dan Sorenson's, Mom, passed away recently at the age of 93. She was remarkably lucid until about a year ago, and, even after then, she continued to have her moments of clarity, and could laugh, though she surely knew she was slipping. I always enjoyed talking to her, and hearing her stories (like the time she saw The Three Stooges, live, at the historic Oriental Theatre in Downtown Chicago in 1933!). She was like a second Mom to me. Not only is she the only (then) Octagenarian to buy me Johnny Thunders T-Shirt (in her last days in the hospital, she requested a Ramones shirt to wear), but when her Son, Dan told her, recently, that he had just met Alice Cooper (at the charity "Xmas Puddin' Show" in Phoenix, which featured a reunion of the original, surviving, Alice Cooper Group), she quipped, "Oh, is he still weird and wearing makeup?" When Dan explained that Alice is actually a very nice guy (Dan and I briefly met him at one of his shows at The House of Blues, which was great, but, the guy who ripped us off that night....His karma is going to kick him in his fat ass, HARD), she told him, "Oh, I know. Your Dad told me that when he met him in the early 70s." (It turns out, they actually DID meet, then). Once as youthful as a person in her nineties could conceivably be, now forever young. Goodbye, Nana. If I ever get to where you're at, I'll call you, first. I've just been informed that Midwestern Rockabilly legend, **Herbie "Hot Lips Baby" Duncan**, has been very ill for over a year. While he should be performing, alongside his esteemed peers, at festivals like The Ponderosa Stomp and The Green Bay Rockin'50s Fest, he isn't well enough to do so at this time. Please think a good thought for him. Hopefully, there are still some great performances left in him, and a life more easily enjoyed. More info, some incredible photos, and a chance to send your best wishes can be found on Herbie's myspace (listed under his own name). Apparently, Minnesota Rock 'n' Roll wildman, **Kai Ray**, about whom not much is widely known (an hilarious attempt to interview the man was made in *Kicks* magazine. Referring to himself in the third person, Ray refused to come to the phone, even though he already had!), passed away some time last year. Ray is known as one of the true founders of the Minnesota Rock 'n' Roll scene, playing Muddy Waters to The Trashmen's Rolling Stones, when the latter derived their name from his song, "Trashman's Blues." His best-known song, "I Want Some Of That" is one of the wildest rockers ever, featuring pounding tribal drums, a South Sea Island mating cry, and crazy bird calls (While Martin Denny used exotic "Bird calls," derived from humans, for atmosphere, Ray used the same technique to greater effect by rattling his tongue, in tune, like a cockatoo with jingle bells stuck in his throat. This technique was acheived, it seems, without any voicespeed alteration. Besides that, this song is a hot n' horny chord-slasher with innuendo aplenty (but, you knew that by the title). If Ray is gone, he was not of this earth, and, for that, we thank him. If Ray is still here, he's gone, all right, and still not of this earth.

As you can tell, we lost too many, too soon, this time around. Lest We Forget: Johnny Hart (creator of the "B.C." comic strip and co-creator of "Wizard of Id"), Ed Bradley Peter Jennings, Jessie Mae Hemphill, Glenn Ford, Jack Palance, Coretta Scott King, Kim McLagan (Loving wife to Ian McLagan, Small Faces, Faces, and sometimes Rolling Stones' keyboard player and just a sweet, sweet man. She'd also been previously married to Keith Moon), Lou Rawls, Jack Palance, Joe Barbara (one half of the legendary Hanna-Barbara cartoon team. Previously announced dead several years ago (!!), Barbara lived to be 95. He was also early British Rocker, Vince Taylor's, brother-in-law, and financed his career with early Huckleberry Hound profits. Is it possible that "Jet Screamer" was influenced, in part, by Taylor (throw Conrad Birdie into the mix, and we've come full circle!), Ed Benedict (Created Fred Flintstone, Yogi Bear, and Huckleberry Hound for Hanna-Barbara. Died within a short time of Joe Barbara), Dennis Payton (sax player, Dave Clark Five), Mickey Hargitay, Robert Lockwood, Jr., Gerald LeVert, Curt Gowdy, Raymond "Boz" Burrell (bassist, Bad Co., King Crimson. Not to be confused with British Rockabilly guitarist, Boz Boorer), Johnny Jenkins (Otis Reddings' guitar player), Maynard Ferguson, Bruce Gary (drummer, The Knack. Also drummed with a reformed Love, then featuring both Arthur Lee and Bryan Maclean) in the late 70s. Charles Smith (Kool and The Gang), Jane Wyatt (Father Knows Best), Ian Copeland (agent for The Police, Go Go's, REM, Adam Ant, and others), Myron Waldman (animator, Max Fleischer studios-Popeye, Betty Boop, Superman, etc), Peter Benchley (author-Jaws, The Deep, etc) Daniel McKenna (Toby Beau), Buddy Blue (Beat Farmers), June Pointer, Cindy Walker (C & W songwriter), Shelly Winters, Fayard Nicholas (tap dance legend w/ The Nicholas Bros), Kirby Puckett, Buck O' Neil (Negro League Baseball player, and, later, first Black MLB Coach), Red Buttons, Aaron Spelling, Floyd Patterson (two time Heavyweight Boxing champion), Max Schmeling (also former Heavyweight Boxing champ), Arthur Miller, Hunter S. Thompson, Ossie Davis, Paul Hester (Split Enz, Crowded House), Anita O' Day, Vince Walnick (keyboardist, Grateful Dead), and, probably, too many others to mention. We'll have to catch up, next time.

UPDATES

SAMMY DAVIS JR. UPDATE

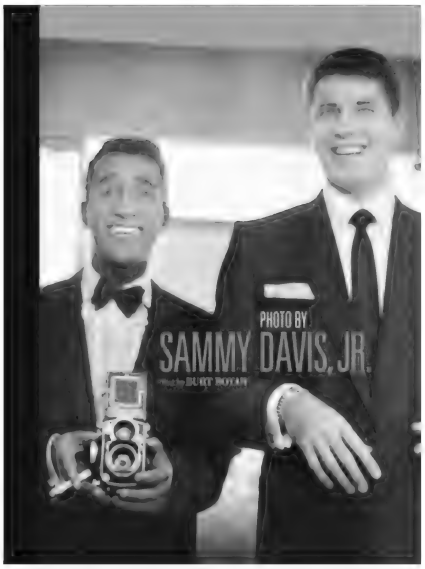


Photo By Sammy Davis Jr. (edited by Burt Boyar, Regan 2007) This coffeetable art book is the most important Sammy Davis project to be released in many years. This is a huge collection of photographs taken by Sammy Daivs, Jr. over the course of his career, so other than a few photos he took in the mirror (including the cover shot of Sammy and Jerry Lewis) his image rarely appears in these pages. But nonetheless this may be the most revealing collection of his work ever released. It seems Davis, who had an addictive personality, not only loved taking pictures, but ultimately approached it like an addict, constantly upgrading to the newest, most expensive cameras, and perpetually snapping casual, posed, action, and personal photos everywhere he went. While there are certainly entries in the book that look like an amateur's snapshots (particularly his images of Robert Kennedy), there are also several ridiculously artistic shots equal to the best work in *Life* magazine, and the bulk of the images demonstrate a great eye, and more importantly, genuine affection and empathy for his subjects, be they his children, the celebrities he worshipped, members of his race suffering in justices, or (perhaps his most inspired subject) beautiful women. His lustful, yet surprisingly respectful, lens is equally enamored with a Marilyn Monroe as with a nameless showgirl, or some chick who came up to his suite to "pose." One could certainly make an argument that because this work was not pandering to an audience it is some of his most creative, personal, and outstanding. And as far as the lesser work I these pages, there's nothing wrong with the amateurish passages where he was a fan snapping photos of stars – he was a fan! It's notable that this book was compiled and has the text written by Burt Boyar, who along with his late wife co-wrote two of Davis' autobiographies. Boyar has taken on the role of semi-official Keeper of the Sammy Gate in recent years (the *New York Times* recently reported that Boyar is racing against Outkast's Andre 3000 to get a SDJ feature film greenlighted and in production.). His text in this book is informative, but not crucial. In addition to several factual errors, Boyar obviously can't genuinely understand Sammy's feelings about race, celebrity, or his own family. Ultimately the photos stand on their own.

Gordon Jenkins "Complete Manhattan Tower" (Capitol, 1956) According to Burt Boyar (in his forward to Photo by Sammy Davis Jr.) Davis was shooting photos out the window of his penthouse while in NYC for his Broadway starring role in *Mr.Wonderful* while Boyar was (unsuccessfully) arguing over the phone with the Maitre d' of a posh, segregated nightclub. "We didn't go to the club that night, but the call wasn't wasted," Boyar writes. "One of the pictures he shot through his window became the cover of an instrumental album, *Manhattan Towers*." If Mr. Boyar isn't completely mistaken I will assume this similarly titled, vocal LP that came out soon after *Mr. Wonderful* hit Broadway is the record he was referring to (the cover photo is uncredited). This song suite is not too well known, though you may have heard "New York's My Home," possibly because (amongst others) Davis recorded it, furthering boosting the idea that this is the LP he shot the cover for. Basically "Manhattan Tower" is a corny love letter to New York City using a chaste, touristy fling with a Go tham stranger as a metaphor for falling for the city. The photo on the cover is pretty good, I guess. The CD reissue uses a different image.

Don Rickles "speaks!" (Warner Brothers, 1969) You are

forgiven if you think Rickles' only LP is 1968's "Hello Dummy," especially considering how his current stage show still is basically that album verbatim. This record is Don taking questions and riffing insults. About Sammy: "Can't get help like that anymore. To have a guy who can sing and dance...and dust..."

Sanford "Dinner at George's" (NBC, 1980), ***Sanford*** "The Benefit" (NBC, 1980) Not everyone remembers that a few years after leaving the show that made him a star, Foxx revived the character for two short seasons in a revamped show that replaced Lamont with a fat Caucasian hillbilly and focused on Fred's courtship of a wealthy socialite. While one could certainly compare this to *Archie Bunker's Place*, this show is nowhere near the disappointed that *All in the Family* sequel proved to be. Though this also features a kinder, more racially sensitive protagonist, Foxx, unlike Carol O' Conner, was a comedian first and foremost, and his ad libs and shtick can be just as funny in this as on any episode of *Sanford and Son*. Also, seeing two older African Americans in a committed, relatively adult relationship was pretty bold, and a nice departure from the original show. But what makes this program most interesting is that instead of stocking the show with the chitlin' circuit colleagues that elevated the original show above the material the hack Jewish writers were churning out, here Foxx seems to be calling upon his Vegas after hours cronies. This is best exemplified by the two shows in which Davis appeared. In the fifth episode Fred takes his paramour to a posh restaurant (best joke: the waiter serves a bottle of old wine, prompting Fred to say," 1944, that was an excellent year...unless you were a Nazi..."). For no apparent reason, sitting in the restaurant at a table behind Fred and his lady, Eve, are Sammy Davis Jr, Stymie Beard (of *Our Gang/Little Rascals* fame), Pricne Spencer, of the tap dancing team the Step Brothers, and Harvey, Illinois comedian/honorary Negro Tom Dressen. They do not speak, and the only one who gets a closeup is Sammy who mugs after Fred, noticing the table, identifies the three lesser stars, but then, in reference to the plaid-suited, giant ring-wearing Candyman says, "I don't know who *he* is" Most interesting is that the celebrity table is far enough away from the microphones that apparently the group is really talking (and my guess is that the wine they are drinking in every shot is real). Sammy cracks up Stymie at one point, and frequently the conversers seem deeply engaged with each other. A possible explanation for this celebrity pow won may be revealed as the show ends and the screen declares "Directed by Sammy Davis Jr and Jim Drake." Of course, directing a standard sitcom is not much of a challenge, and the fact that Drake, who helmed all the show's episodes, was on board makes Sammy's turn in the director's chair less impressive still. However, it's a pretty good show, and he must have had a pretty good time, as he comes back (though not as a director) for the season finale. Eve is throwing a benefit and Sammy seems to have forgotten his commitment to perform at it (see <u>That's Not Funny</u> below). Fred takes matters into his own hands by sneaking into a Sammy recording session dressed in metallic gold glitter vines, wearing a Robin Hood pimp hat, and carrying a stand up bass. Sammy, who is talking to his real life music director George Rhodes is looking fantastic, with a conk that looks like a black rubber swimcap. He does some nice crooning, and then plays straightman to Fred's goofiness. After some hijinks he agrees to appear at the benefit, even though his schedule that day includes, "Dinah, Mike, Johnny, Phil" and "guest engineer on *Soul Train*." When Davis is a no show Fred takes matters into his own hands by coming out is a sharp suit, big sunglasses, and an avalanche of rings on his fingers doing a Sammy impersonation, including facial tics and vocal affectations. Foxx rarely does impressions, so this is great. Also, it's notable that when he hits this episode's stage he is really being Redd Foxx and not Fred Sanford. When Sammy arrives they do a duet of "Chicago," and some hoofing. This goes on for a few minutes, and one could certainly argue that with the exception of his legendary "All in the Family" visit, this is the best Sammy sitcom appearance of his career, as he really gets to be Sammy. The best moment is early in the duet where Foxx messes with his crotch, making Sammy genuinely bust up. While obviously it's hard to know if a man who falls out of his chair for every comedian on the *Tonight Show* and is famed for his fake chuckling is ever sincerely laughing, but I'm going to vote "yea" on this one. If this sequence doesn't make you happy, you don't like "entertainment."

<u>That's Not Funny</u> by Vince Sanders (self published, 2006) This is an account of the early career of Tim Reid (*WKRP in Cincinnati, Sister, Sister*) and stand up comic Tom Dreesen, when they performed as the first black and white comedy team (not counting Jack Benny and Rochester). Sanders, a radio journalism veteran managed them, and has a number of interesting stories, though he did not remain close to either man over the years. One of Sanders' stylistic tics is a tendency to spend a great deal of ink describing a very minor incident, which actually provides some very revealing anecdotes (though often more revealing about Sanders' quirks than Reid's or Dreesen's). Anyhow, there is a huge chunk of this book devoted to an incident where Sanders got to hang out with Sammy who committed to play a benefit, but then after calling Sammy's secretary a zillion times it (perhaps too slowly to Sanders) became clear that Sammy just can't turn down someone is person who makes a worthy request, but also just can't fulfill all his promises and handles that by just not taking the calls. The weary assistant clearly dealt with calls like Sanders' all the time. For more on this fascinating book check out my interview/review online at www.timeout.com/chicago/articles/books/20761/funny-business) or just buy it from Amazon.

Saturday Night Live (NBC, May 8, 1976), ***Saturday Night Live The Complete First Season*** (Universal, 2006) If this episode, hosted by Madeline Kahn, is remembered at all it is for former psyche-rocker Chevy Chase flexing his musical muscle by opening the show as an R&B organ jamming Ronald Reagan, grooving Booker T. style, and occasionally telling his black saxman to, "Take it away, boy." Later in the show he plays maracas and sings backup with Carly Simon (in a musical number that for some reason was not performed live, but prerecorded). Of more interest to us is the long, dreary Nixon skit, in which Dan Aykroyd plays the ex-president introspectively reminiscing about his days in office. At one point Garrett Morris comes in as Sammy and recreates the infamous hug, as well as doing a number of Sammy signatures, including the insincere body-shaking laughter Sammy would often respond with regardless of how funny whatever he was laughing at actually was. While Morris is a poor mimic it's interesting how two-dimensional Sammy's public persona had become, allowing for even a substandard impression to be pretty spot on. The fact that it would Billy Crystal's far more affectionate impersonation on *SNL* a decade later that Sammy claims was a wakeup call for him to become less of a caricature probably reflects how out of it on drugs and ego Sammy was circa the Bicentennial, because this impersonation really sticks it to him. This is available on last year's *First Season* box set, and this episode especially points out how unreliable our memories of the pre-DVD/online episodes/cable reruns are. Because lesser episodes were rarely, or never, rerun we have really overestimated the quality of the original Not Ready For Primetime Players as a great deal of this season was drearily unfunny. While none of it is as lazily mediocre as the worst seasons of contemporary *SNL*, awful, epic-length laugh-free skits like this Nixon one, non-edgy, sub-*Carol Burnett Show* skits like one where Belushi plays a hardboiled detective who breaks into popular song ("I will follow him…"), and stuff that feels like the worst material to come out of improv workshops abounds.

MONKEY ROCKNROLL UPDATE

Monkeysongs: "Gorilla Boy" Ben Davis, "Monkey Man" Glenn Hughes, "Monkey on Our Backs" – Fulton Lights "

ROBOT ROCKNROLL UPDATE

Android Eats – An artist-run Brooklyn record label.

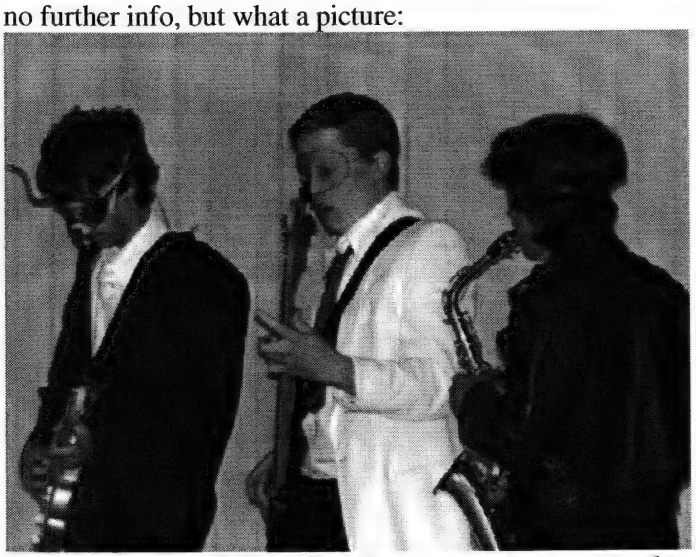
MASKED ROCKNROLL UPDATE

Captain Beefheart and his Magic Band – in addition to the famed trout mask, the band wore many surreal masks as they entered their experimental phases.

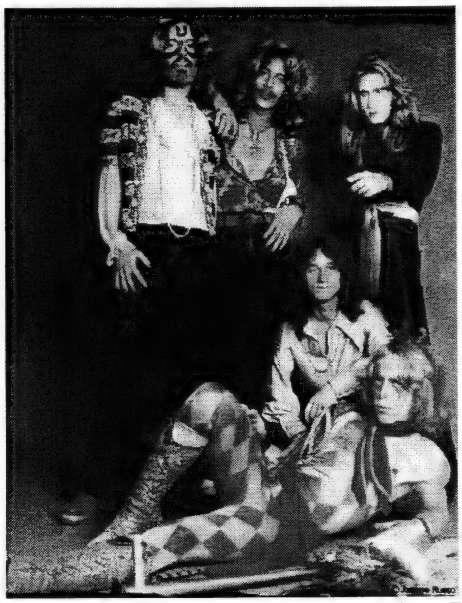
Corpse Grinders – Arthur "Killer" Kane's '78 band wore pale green face paint & black uniforms with Nazi-esque armbands.

Feist – For her 2007 *SNL* appearance all of her backup singers and 2/3 of her banjo section wore bandit masks.

Highland hall California 8th Grade talent show band – no further info, but what a picture:



Magic Tramps – Early 70s NYC vaudeville-esque rock n roll band. Wore war paint bordering on .KISS-style makeup.



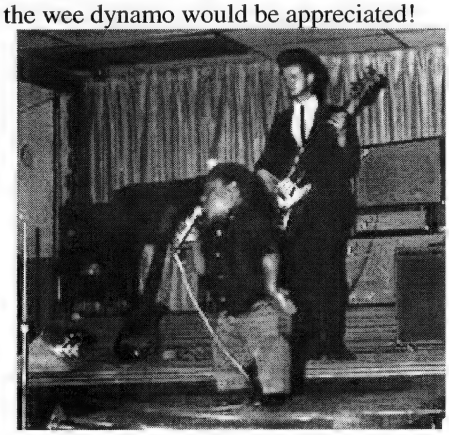
The Meteors –The Bolognese-based Italian Beat band released a 1964 masked monsterpiece on RCA records. They toned down the creepiness for their '65 followup, an all Fab Four cover album called "Beatlemania," and dissipated in '66. In the band's wake, guitarist Jimmy Villotti had a long career in Italian music, including his band I Kisses and the Tritons.

Thor –The Canadian rock god is a man of many masks!

The Vampires of Dartmoore – "Dracula's Music Cabinet" □(1969, Metronome) features Horst Ackermann & Heribert Thusek's spooky German psyche funk electorica prog, plus monster makeup!, Includes: "Die Folterkammer Des Dr. Sex" & "Frankenstein Grusst Alpha 7."

MIDGET ROCKNROLL UPDATE

Little Johnny Shaw – Dallas area '60s rocker – any more info on the wee dynamo would be appreciated!



ONEMANBAND UPDATE

Joe Mason and his One Man Band – This Calgary-based, 6-piece one man band released an LP circa 1973 playing polkas and some soft rock covers ("Knock Three Times"). Features a great photo of Joe's slick trailer .

THREE STOOGES ARE BETTER THAN NONE!

"The Weirdness" reviewed by *Madeline Bocaro*

The Weirdness is certainly not normal. If it's the worst Stooges album as many are saying, then maybe it's the best Iggy Pop album (besides *Lust For Life*, or *The Idiot* – but that's another story). We've already read many harsh reviews, and a few politely praising their first album in 34 years. Old timers are complaining, newcomers act as if they know what's missing (drugs obviously), but nobody's really appreciating the fact that ***we have three living Stooges recording together again in our lifetime! This alone is a miracle!*** And their sax player has also survived the Funhouse! This time around however, true to form, they have *NOT* pleased the masses!

Ever since the early 70's, Iggy & The Stooges fathered every despicable new form of rock music to crawl up from the street, and onto the radio. In their day, they were pariahs - highly unmarketable, unfashionable and outcast by the mainstream, yet adored by a cult of rock purists. Music history would have been radically different without the steadfast foundation the Stooges built with blood and guts. There was no calculation in the band's formation. It just happened - a primal force of nature. The Stooges erupted in a loud burst, similar to the big bang that created planet earth. You might call it a natural disaster! They took the pop out of pop, wiped out the sixties, inspired heavy metal and revered soul, rhythm and blues.

Fast forward to spring, 2007. While taking a neighbourhood walk, listening to the new Stooges offering in my iPod expecting the worst, the first song began. I was immediately transformed back into the teenage delinquent outcast I had been almost forty years ago (while enjoying *Funhouse* on my 8-track)! I now felt a mischievous smirk emerging on my face and my head began bobbing. I reveled in the fact that I'm currently unemployed, and my stride hit a major groove – *the Stooges are back*! As folks jogged by, I knew for sure that whatever shlock they were listening to was not nearly as fucked up as "Trollin'"! I wish my parents were still alive – not so much because I miss them, but just so I could see their faces grimace when hearing this all too familiar glorious noise once again! That was half the fun, wasn't it?

Track one is encouraging. It gives hope that the rest of this damned album will be a masterpiece. However, we hear very few glimmers of greatness until the final song, "I'm Fried' when Andy Mackay's sax impressively replicates a stampede of irate elephants, hyenas and cows during an air raid, in unison with some sublime Asheton guitar wailing. Somewhere in between the first and last tracks are a few laughs, some kick-ass riffs, classic wah-wahs, and whiny vocal over-indulgence by Iggy. If there is anyone to blame for the flaws on this album, it's the grumpy old front man!

The Weirdness is just as lyrically juvenile (if not more so) than the gems these guys produced in their day, but unfortunately not as pure, exciting and minimal. While yelps, growls or two-word repetitive mantras used to be quite effective, the wordiness here is ***too much information!*** They should have stuck to this brilliant method, recently described by Iggy to David Fricke at SXSW; "*When Ron started jamming the chords in 'No Fun,' I knew instantly that we would be in the book...As for the lyrics of that track, I always thought that 'no' is a great word. One of my favorite parts of the Rolling Stones' Satisfaction is when Mick goes "No no no." And then, on the other hand, you had the Beach Boys, another great band, who had this song where they kept repeating "Fun, fun, fun", so I thought to myself, "Well, there you go.""*

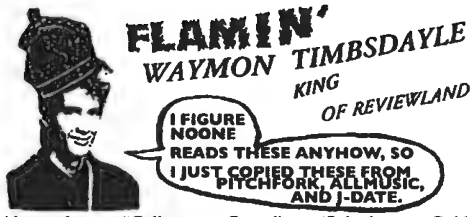
The Asheton brothers (Ron and Scott – guitar and drums) rock out like no one else – no question. Bassist (ex- Minuteman) Mike Watt blends in well. No amount of inane or excessive lyrics can deny the power of the band, but something is definitely lacking...perhaps more cowbell? After all, they used sleigh bells on "I Wanna Be Your Dog"!

Living up to their own incomparable legacy would be impossible, yet considering that The Stooges have actually gone overboard and did too much thinking, it's all pretty ironic. They've become more savant than idiot! That they've learned to play their instruments better doesn't help the situation. ***The dum dum boys should have just gone dummer!!*** Fortunately, no track is too long that it becomes uninteresting. Unfortunately, no track is long enough to evolve into a free-form primal beast encompassing blues/jazz and hysteria that was the Stooges' trademark. Anyway, if you really wanna dig this album, you've gotta play it *LOUD!*

Producer Steve Albini wasn't to heavy handed on the mix, so he is probably not to blame. Yet, we must consider who produced the other three Stooges albums and successfully conjured up their magic; The Velvet Underground's John Cale, (*The Stooges*) the Kingsmen's Don Gallucci - who played the timeless keyboard riff on the 1963 hit "Louie Louie" at age 15 – (*Funhouse*) and David Bowie (*Raw Power*).

I'm torn. It's enjoyable. It's fun. It's actually growing on me. But the Stooges' allure was that they were sick, crazed, dangerous, unpredictable and *SERIOUS*! Nowadays, everything around us is sick and dangerous - including Britney Spears who has apparently cracked up - so the Stooges now sound somewhat safe. However, seeing them live next week should be fun. They are still the greatest live band around! Three Stooges are better than none!

(There are four extra tracks on the vinyl version of The Weirdness; "O Solo Mio", "Claustrophobia", "I Wanna Be Your Man" and "Sounds Of Leather").



Abernethy "College Grove" (Spinning Gold, www.spinninggold.ca) AberNIFTY!

A Brokeheart Pro "The Kitten Next Door" (Kitten Next Door) A fixed heart DREAM! This lady made me fall in love with audio all over again!

AC/DC - Back In Black – A Classic Album Under Review DVD (Sexyintellectual) This could be the worst entry in the *Under Review* series, the British budget conscious *Behind the Music*-style direct to DVD franchise. While putting "Back in Black" in context, and having Brit crits discuss every individual track, it lumbers, offers little insight, and features the least interesting archival footage (most of the concert stock looks to be from the Stiff Upper Lip tour, or some 90s outing). It actually opens with the narrator, in the first sentence, making the mistake of thinking AOR stands for Adult Oriented Rock, rather than the correct Album Oriented Rock (of everything AC/DC is, it sure ain't "adult"). But apparently I am totally hooked, because as bad as this was, I actually had a good time watching it: I seem to have caught *Under Review* fever! The ubiquitous bald *Kerrang* guy with the veddy English dentalwork has become my rock critic hero, I have come to admire the low budget technique of showing records playing rather than finding live footage and of having cover bands and fans play riffs rather than clear the recordings. In this DVD the Angus from an AC/DC cover band is interviewed in costume...sweet!

Action Andy "Haunted Honky Tonk" (Relampago-go 2016 Wilson Avenue National City, CA 91950) Genuinely twisted roots rockings that seems to actually be played by ghost musicians. Action Andy is a master of Spookabilly, and if you like twangin, echo-systems, and being haunted by psychobilly haints, you NEED this platter.

The Acorn "glory hope mountain" (Paper Bag, paperbagrecords.com) To be quite honest, I don't have the focus or attention span to fully appreciate the biographical aspect of this CD, a tribute to the dramatic life of the singer's immigrant mother. But man, the earnesst, yearning, powerful music here sure gets the point across. Haunting, hypnotizing, melancholy, and occasionally mildly upbeat in a way that is surprisingly uplifting, this is a magnificent album.

The Action Design "into a sound" (pop smear, popsmear.com) Everyone should be getting some of this Action! It would be accurate to label this pop rock band "awesome!"

Adam Balbo "6 Outta 9 w/Beats" (myspace.com/adambalbo) Corny busker + genius robot = the future of music!

Keith John Adams "Unclever" (Happy happy Birthday To Me, hhbtm.com) Adams is so perfectly British an indie popster that I suspect he's faking that accent. No one could be that cleverly cool, oddly classy, and so perfectly in love with American 60s music. Apparantly, at some point he was even branded with the term "Art-Skiffle" for Pete's (as in Pete Best's) sake! Bloody awesome!

Terry Adams "rhythm spell" (Clang) Cleverness and novelty in rock n roll often comes off as purely clever (They Might Be Giant) or purely novelty (Weird Al), but Adams (and his NRBQ cronies, when they choose to go that route) is one of the few who make absurdity, goofiness and head-scratching weirdness read as pure joy. This fantastic album will make you actually happy.

Against Me! "New Wave" (Warner Brothers) Better than Avril Lavigne!

The Aggrolites Reggae Hit LA" (Hellcat) This band lays Studio One-sounding classic-sounding Reggae/ska music with a vocalist who knows his Classic Rock song-stylings. Surprisingly, this is way better than that formula would imply.

Air Conditioning "Dead Rails" (Load) The most beautiful record ever made.

Airiel "The Battle of Sealand" (High Wheel, highwheelrecordsllc.com) Local veterans got their band name because there music is airy and they all ride the El because they can't afford cars because not enough people in the world like shiny, deafening shoegaze-core.

Alamo Race Track "Black Cat John Brown" (Minty Fresh) Hailing from the Netherlands and vibrating in your nether-regions, these genre-defiers make either chilling phonetic-English Blues Pop or brainy art rock or scary pretty music or pretty scary music. Remember, A.R.T. spells ART...but it also almost spells AORTA, and this band has heart!

The Alarm Clocks "The Time Has Come" (Norton Box 646 Cooper Station NY, NY 10276) I cannot remember an instance of a sixties band, not to mention an (unjustly) obscure-o one, coming back with an album of originals and it being this kick ass. These Midwestern garage punksters may look middle-aged, but this is as angry, lustful, and potent a teenage record as you're gonna hear this year. There are a few awkward passages (modern lingo and aging dad issues pop up occasionally), but for the most part this Alarm woke me up with no snooze button in sight. The Alarm Clocks archival reissue has long been one of my favorite Norton releases, but this is now one of my all time favorite non-oldies albums the formidable label has ever unleashed.

Alcoholics Unanimous "20 Years of Tanked Up Tunes" (Steel Cage) This collection of sloppy, ridiculous drinking songs (many of them covers of classics like "Six Pack to Go" or bastardized tunes, like the Brownsville Station variation "Drinking in the Men's Room") will give you a buzz and then hit you with a bottle. Since the Reagan administration this Rancid Vat side project has been having fun, and not pretending that they're doing anything more than that, which is a pretty good way to spend twenty years. Though they really should have waited til next year for a 21 year old retrospective.

Alias "Collected Remixes" (anticon) Ambiant grooves that mellowed my harsh. I'm still not sure exactly what drugs make hip hop heads craft music this blissed-out, but I could probably use some around now.

A Life Once Lost "Iron Gag" (Ferret, ferretstyle.com) Pleasantly pummeling.

Annisteen Allen "Fujiyama Mama" (Rev-Ola) Not sure why I've never heard of this tuff broad, but as the title indicates, she recorded the Wanda Jackson standard back during her late 40s/early 50s reign for King and Capitol. Everything on this is either the kind of tough gal backtalk Jackson or Sugarpie Desanto recorded, but even the more staid stuff (mind you this is the 40s) almost always casts her giving as good as she's taking from her (usually) no good men. Assuming some of you were as clueless as me to this R&B pioneer, remedy your ignorance quicklike and pick up this stellar compilation.

Devon Allman's Honeytribe "Torch" (Livewire 3050 Royal Blvd S – suite 110 Alpharetta GA 30022) If the Black Crowes aren't classic rock enough foryou Devon carries on a family tradition so classic it's crusty.

All My Loving DVD (Voiceprint) First things first: You are absolutely required to buy this unmissable DVD and watch it, so you might as well not even read this review, just get it and enjoy. But for you non-heeders, here's the deal. At the height of the rock n roll 60s Tony Palmer makes a documentary for the BBC in which he will explain the Beatles, Zappa, Donovan, the Pink Floyd, Hendrix, the Stones, and the Who (all featured and interviewed) to the general populace. And he will do it using none of the hackish techniques that seem mandatory for music documentaries. Instead he creates a semi-linear, impressionistic, charged manifesto that it is hard to believe was ever shown on TV anywhere. Allowing the musicians to earnestly – and they are so earnest it hurts --- express how monumental and crucial they believe the culture they are involved in to be, we get a piece that is far too jarring and frightening to be called idealistic, but also too sympathetic and good to be a work of cynicism. Bonus material is an interview with Palmer done by perhaps the worst interviewer in DVD bonus material history, yet the filmmaker is able to salvage the would be squandered opportunity by the sputtering poor listener and still tell the fascinating story of how this film came to be and how it remarkably got on the air.

All Teeth and Knuckles "Club Hits to Hit the Clubs With" (Lujo 3209 Jennie Dr. Morgan City, LA 70380) Sleazy ironic sex disco is inherently going to be OK, because it's about sex and debauchery and has a dance beat, but this ultra-ironic, somewhat desperate disc made me feel dirty in the wrong way. The centerpiece is a sort-of answer song to CSS' tune about making love to Death From Above that not only encourages to undress to CSS, but also opens with an awkward spoken explanation of the song's cleverness or non-cleverness or whatever it is. In my book that intro in itself is way to meta for the drug-hazed dance floor.

Alphafemes "firstsight" (Hardkandy) Ouch! That strange singing is harshing those groovy beats!

Brent Amaker and the Rodeo (brentamaker.com) Anyone who tries to sing like Johnny Cash gets an "A" branded in his hide for effort! Both kinds of music here...country *and* western!

American Catastrophe (myspace.com/amcat) Music that sounds like it wants to strangle and/or bludgeon you, but artfully.

American Steel "Destroy Their Future" (Fat Wreck) I'm kind of amazed how Fat, the home of 90s pop punk, has been putting out a slew of serious rock n roll records lately. And not intentionally dumb shitty rock, but genuinely inspired, intense, straining to emote (but not to emo) ROCK N ROLL!

Ampline "Roasry" (Shake It) Champ o' mine!

Lindsay Anderson "if" (Minty Fresh) I'm going to give Minty Fresh the benefit of the doubt and assume that they were not trying to trick me with this title into thinking this was the long-lost soundtrack album to director Lindsay Anderson's "If...," the brilliant 1968 allegorical film that introduced a pre-*Clockwork Orange* Malcolm McDowell to the world. I will also assume that this is a different Anderson, as the Indian-born filmmaker died over a decade ago. That out of the way I was able to deduce that this Anderson is half of m.i.a. local duo L'altra (whose dreamy, romantic music is almost opposite in tone to the dark film I will now stop referencing, though just as dramatic). Well, the first thing to declare, I suppose, is that despite Anderson's singing being enchanting, the magic of L'altra's vocal interplay is not matched here, despite some amazingly rich, atmospheric production. However, did I mention the amazingly rich, atmospheric production? It certainly frames Anderson's hypnotizing instrument in a way that makes her even more intriguing. The result, for L'altra fans, is that instead of envying that this singing angel has found a soulmate, here you just float away in her siren's voice.

Ryan Anderson 'the Garden Path" (HHBTM) Better than all the other Ryans!

Anderson Brothers "Solid Blue" (andersonbrothers.org) Damn, it's bluesy in here...twangs for the memories!

An Evening with Andy Williams DVD (RPM) Long before Metallica did it, Mr. Moon River (or at least the Mr. Moon River who isn't Jerry Butler) teamed up with an Orchestra and let it rip. Though I generally love Williams' voice and stage presence, this 1978 British concert film has him demonstrating some kind of chemistry problem, as Williams and the London Symphony Orchestra just don't sound that good together. Williams' voice sounds lazy and off, and while I dig his pop phrasing, and great medleys ("Danny Boy" into "Almost There" into "Born Free" is about as perfect a slice of seventies shmaltz stagecraft as you can imagine) this does not seem like the man who has mesmerized me in his Chicago Theater Christmas concerts.

A New Dawn Fades "I See the Nightbirds" (NFI/Alone, alonerecords.com) New rule: if a bands name is a sentence with more than two words in it, don't listen to the CD.

Angel and the Love Mongers "The Humanist Queen" (Rocksnob) Mongered my love...but did it with more subtlety than most mongerers. But it was ominous subtlety.

The Anthem Sound (Eyeball) As advertised, this sounds grandly anthemic, even with a little whine to the vocals. And you can dance to it!

Antiseen "The Boys from Brutalsville" (TKO) Just as the lead singer for Jackyl had a chainsaw for an instrument (a stagehand I knew told me they actually sound checked it), Jeff Clayton, frontman for the greatest of scum-rock bands, Antiseen, actually plays his own blood in concert. The juicing Southern gentleman has a long legacy of recorded brutality, but perhaps the recording most clotted with crimson is this classic album which is getting a nice reissue here. I'm not sure if it's been digitally re-mastered, or blessed by a voodoo priest, or what, but after playing this my bedroom looks like the elevator in *The Shining* opened up into it.

Antelope "Reflector" (Dischord) This music actually sounds as graceful and quietly super bad ass as an actual antelope.

A.O.G. Media Presents Compilation Volume 7 (AOG POB 3652 Victoria TX 77901) Jesse De La O is a rock n roll missionary, and his virtual globehopping has him saving brilliant bands from Eastern Europe, Arabia, South America, and all over the U.S., then bringing them to us. This may be the best comp yet, but amazingly, Jesse is still the best rocker on the comp!

applicant by Jesse Reklaw (microcosm, 5307 N. Minnesota Ave Portland OR 97217) A gloriously sublime violation! A stack of found 60s-70s Ivy League college applications, with photos, and reviewers notes, are turned into a beautifully printed book of brainy mugshots and personal shots taken at said photo subjects.

The Aquarium (Dischord) The soundtrack music to the best porno movie ever.

Archer Avenue "We Watched The Headlight We Watched The Stars" (archeravenuemusic.com) Finally - -a new band whose singer sings like a *man!*

Arctic Monkeys "Favourite Worst Nightmare" (Domino) So good they should be called the Arctic Monkees!

Arizona "Welcome Back Dear Children," "Fameseeker and the Mono" (arizonatheband.com) Countrified pretty psychedelia that balances preciousness with strangeness. Better than the ice tea of the same name.

Arks "The International" (High Wheel) If the pairs of animals entering your ark march up the plankway with these kind of funky flavored martial steps then you should have little problem with repopulation.

Army of Jesus "Book Bomb" ep (Criminal IQ 3540 N. Southport Chicago, IL 60657) Army of MESS! And by mess I mean sonic trash compactor powered rock n roll!

Art in Manila "Set the Woods on Fire" (Saddle Creek POB 8554 Omaha NE 68108) Despite this music having some folk roots and mindtrip contents it actually grooves, at times deeply, and even when shallowly, with conviction. This will hypnotize you.

John Ashfield "Love is Blue" (johnashfieldmujsic.com) Listening to this romantic sweet crooner brings to mind one thought and one thought only: I'd fuck him!

Greg Ashley "Painted Garden" (Birdman) Kicks Ash! Subtly.

Asking Alexandria "The Irony Of Your Perfection" (Hangman's Joke, hangmansjoke.net) Extreme music so intense it neutered my ferret. Now when my ferret wears eyeliner when I take it to the darkcore clubs, she does it for herself, and not just to attract other ferrets.

Asono (Fishface) AsoYES!

The Asteroid #4 "An Amazing Dream" (Rainbow Quartz 440 9th Avenue 17th floor, suite 1701 NYC 10001) More monotonous than playing Asteroids for 4 hours. And just as hypmotizing.

Asylum Street Spankers "Mommy Says No!" (Yellow Dog, yellowdogrecords.com) Music for naughty, naughty, naughty children. Naughty hillbilly children expecially. And if you are, or are responsible for, a naughty hipster hillbilly child, then you need this like a 60 pound cat needs insulin shots.

The Atari Star "Aniseed" (Johann's Face POB 479164 Chicago IL 60647) So good they should change their name to the Atari Superstars! Or even the Super Nintendo Super Stars. Or even the Super Nintendo Super Superstars!

Athfest 2007 compilation CD (Ghostmeat POB 327 Athens GA 30603) Most of these (diverse selection of) bands, especially King of Prussia, M Coast, Bloodkin and Dark Meat, kicked my Ath!

Chet Atkins "Eclectic Guitar" (Cherry Red) While Atkins always seemed closer to youth music than the great Les Paul, he wasn't a rock 'n' roller by any stretch. Atkins was a mature master who really never made his guitar sound as menacing or eerie or cavernous or violent as the rockin' guitarists that were his contemporaries and heirs. Instead he made his Gretsch sing in pretty colors and lovely bird notes that were always about the music and never about showing off dexterity or letting his virtuosity overwhelm the pleasant grooviness. Because his work is so widely available on vinyl I never really researched how much CD stuff is out there, but this new one is a dandy, and listening to this on your car CD player or ipod will definitely make your life better. I can't think of a better review than that.

Martin Atkins "China Dub Sound System – Made In China," **"Look Directly at the Sun: Beijing Pop 2007"** comp CD (Invisible) Did Atkins actually become so enamored by the Chinese underground music scene that he was inspired to put these releases together, or did he read the writing on the wall Is this the equivalent of the newscaster on *The Simpsons* declaring his allegiance to the alien overlords upon reading news of an invasion? Whatever, the motivation, we are the better for it. The dub system mixtape release is good, but it doesn't necessarily give a good picture of what's going on in the birthplace of lead Dora dolls. A recurring theme is a juxtaposition of traditional Chinese melodies with heavy industrial trappings, but it's hard to tell what Atkins brought to the table. This is bore out by the far more interesting companion compilation of Chinese bands (un-remixed). While heavy on industrial, goth, and dark punk influences that Atkins would no doubt find warmly nostalgic, there's little ancient Chinese musical secrets to be found here. However, you will hear some of the fastest rapping you've ever heard (lots of syllables in Chinese) and proof that Japan has no monopoly of poppy punky girl group 60s revivalists. Highly recommended.

Wendy Atkinson "Pink Noise" (Smarten Up! And Get to the Point #304 -1320 Salsbury Dr Van BC Canada V5L 4B3) Despite being called "Pink Noise" this all-bass ambient excursion triumphantly hits the 'brown note!"

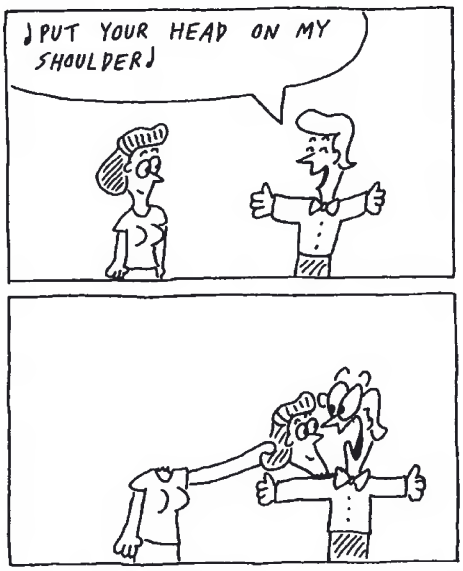
The Attack "About Time! The Definitive MOD-Pop Collection 1967-1968" (RPM) Mod-ified pop that kept London Swinging and pretty birds singing, but these energetic tracks demonstrate that while this was a great band they were no Who. They were more a *who*? Contains more of those British story songs about older working people that don't seem to have an American equivalent.

Attack of the One Man Bands (Rock n Roll Purgatory POB 276258 San Antonio TX 78227) All the greatest one man bands on earth meet in a battle of the bands rumble, including such solo legends as Johnny Lowebow, Margaret Doll Rod, Slow Poisoner, King Louie, Bloodshot Bill, Haunted George, and the mighty John Schooley. Sixty bands and still less total musicians than Broken Social Scene. You need to own it.

A Touch of Wonder book/CD/DVD (?) Fort Thunder-style madness that is oddly all-ages appropriate. In other words, the twisted artwork is a good coloring book, the noise music is great for a three-year olds birthday party, and the music videos are more fun than Hannah Montana!

Avagami "Metegami" (Lens 3230 W. Fullerton #3 Chicago IL 60647) Futuristic jazzperimental robo-music that proves that there's never too many prefixes for Gami. The track "Sickly Time," is Ultragami!

Avenged Sevenfold (Warner Brothers) Useta think they were funny. Now I don't.



A View comix by Michael Goetz (1340 Brandywine Dr. Rockford IL 61108, price: 2 stamps) Send Michael a bunch of stamps and he will send you little books of gag comics – approximately 283 little books a year!

Axe Riverboy "Tutu To Tango" (Minty Fresh) If you *axe* me, this pop-twinged S-S officer (Singer-Songwriter, that is) is a flowing river of awesome!

Babilonci "drobilica Dusa" (Listen Loudest) BabiAWESOME!

Baby Elephant "Turn My Teeth Up"!" (GFK, godforsakenmusic.com) I'd like to say that this Bernie Worrell/Prince Paul collabo was all all-star phunk all the time, but it's only all all-star phunk about 80% of the time. The rest is skit-tacular!

The Babys "The Official Unofficial BABYS Album" (Ork/RPM) Historic as a grand disappointment (there was actually a bubblegum card set of KISS, Village People, and the Babys, so you can see who didn't live up to the hype), this band came up in the late 70s and somehow made the kind of AOR that suited the more faceless bands (like Air Supply) than it did a wannabe cute guy act. Nothing they did rocks hard enough or is poppy enough and certainly there was never the edge that punk and metal (or even gay disco) was bringing to music post-'76. Well, if you want to hear the studio tracks that weren't good enough for the Babys disappointing debut, then your dreams are answered. Thankfully the Babys failure made John Waite's "Missing You" possible.

Bad Machine "Motorfreakout" (Locomotive POBox 116.094 28080 Madrid Spain) These guys are Motörheads, the way Phish were Deadheads.

The Bad Trips (Rocketship Records) Jam band music (if the bands jamming were all made up of hard rock trolls).

The Bakelite Age "The Art of Genius" (Bang!) Good old fashioned bar/pub rock that delivers some twisted, powerful wallops.

Meg Baird "dear companion" (Drag City) Esper-ater Baird de-Psyche-ifies here for a lovely slab of straight up folky singer-songwriterism. I guess you can say she "Baird her soul"! But seriously folks, this is sweet sounding.

The Baldwin Brothers "return of the golden Rhodes" (TVT 23 E. 4th St. NYC 10003) Super awesome keyboard/futuristic pop/something/groovy music that keeps it cool, but never gets 'smooth." This is secretly one of the best bands in Chicago.

Balzac "Deep Blue: Chaos From Darkism" (Misfits Records) I don't get it – I appreciate the way Balzac has lasted 15 years and how they exploit the collector scum with their endless merch and discography, but how are they supposed to be like the Misfits? Their songs have no presence or power (or solid structure or hooks) and they have frosted, hair conditioner enhanced-bouncing, flowing Devillocks? And a Paris Runway posh meticulous skeleton costume? Yet I see someone in a Balzac shirt every week!

Bam Bam & Celeste DVD (Wolfe) This wacky indie feature by Margaret Cho demonstrates why she is a cult hero, and also why she isn't more than a cult figure. Her musings on the 80s and the internet and the nature of outsiderdom seem genuine and engaging and real, but the jokes are only funny-esque at best. That said, I dug this update of *Revenge of the Nerds* teen comedies in which gay's OK (though the in joke is that Cho's fag hag character ends up happily ever after with a character played by Alan Cumming, one of the gayest actors in cinema). And what's funnier than Cho pretending to be her elderly, English-challenged mom? Oh yeah, Robin Williams doing that black preacher voice. And the Diceman. And Muscular Dystrophy.

Bang Gang "Find What You Get" (From Nowhere, fromnowhererecords.com) Banging, but banging gently, albeit with a sublimated fury.

Federico Baribino/Zdenko Franjic "Argentinische Kroatische Freundshaft" (Listen Loudest) Experimental and traditional and weird and solid and futuristic and classic, this is yesterday's music of tomorrow!

Bark Bark Bark "Haunts" (Retard Disco pob 461163 LA, CA 90046) If you want parts of your body to move in ways you've only seen in very strange movies then bark up this tree.

Annie Barker "Mountains and Tumult" (Beautiful Revolution POB 93995 Hollywood CA 90093) Dreamy (and a little bad dreamy [and a little wet dreamy {and a little fever dreamy}]). Barker's voice and music made me tingly in every way you can tingle.

Tim Barry "Rivanna Junction" (Suburban Home PB 40757Denver CA 80204) This isn't a coffeehouse/expensive sweater/bad poetry dude with an acoustic guitar, this is a genuine play on the street/cheap sweater/good poetry dude with an acoustic guitar!

Chris Bathgate " a cork tale wake" (Quite Scientific 544 N. Main St. Ann Arbor MI 48104) A powerfully evocative voice over some pristinely recorded acoustic guitar is a combo that hits you right in the heartstrings.

"Battle of the Beards" comp (Lovitt) On this CD Ben Davis and the Jetts (an Elton reference in name only) goes song for song with Des Ark and then team up for a rock n roll orchestral circus of a collabo. Though as a battle Davis' drum-driven art pop certainly delivers some crushing blows to Des Ark's spare wail-singing (she sounds like the most popular cantor in the history of a Bay Area lesbian synagogue), when it comes to song titles, Des Arks desire to double Fall Out Boys' songtitle word count gives them the edge. The two team ups are just about the two best, though they let Ben name the songs apparently (or just ran out of room on the packaging).

Baylies Band "Risibility and Discourse" (baylies_band@yahoo.com) In the world of rocking there's rock, ROCK, *ROCK*, and *RAWK*! This fine band falls solidly into the hybrid RO*CK*.

Bear Claw "Slow Speed Deep Owls" (Sickroom POB 47830 Chicago, IL 60647) Bore Claw.

Bear Colony (Esperanza Plantation) These bears will maul you with gentle rock.

Bear in Heaven "red bloom of the boom" (Hometapes POB 7563 Boulder CO 80306) If you dig elctro psyche dub mind blowing musical journeys you will join the title churibic ursine, because Cloud Nine here you come!

Bear Proof Suit "Science is Dead" EP (Criminal IQ) If science wasn't already dead this hellacious trashcore assault would have kilt it cold.

The Beasts of Bourbon "Low Life in Spain" DVD (Munster) Though my intense love for their debut LP will never wane, this is a band sounding unspectacular. And despite being filmed with multiple cameras and good lighting, this concert film is not particularly fun to watch. The dude still has a good head of hair, though.

Beatbeatbeat "Living in the Future" (Dirtnap 2615 SE Clinton Portland OR 97202) Sweetsweetsweet! All the songs sound the same...which is to say they all sound awesome! So much snot that buy bulk Claritin. So punk they poop safety pins!

Tom Beaulieu "as the artist awaits" (Donkulus Digital POB 712 Raynham Center MA 02768) Beaudacious! And quirk-tastic! Sounds like your favorite weird uncle if he was really good at music.

Behold (beholdband.com) Bedull. Which is weird to say, because they try to do all kinds of things, from Latin excursions to heavenly harp plucking to twangy rurality to atmosphere audio to droney rock, but somehow it is all pretty boring. But at least it's diversely boring! And there's titties in the artwork.

Behold! The Living Corpse (Land o' Smiles) I believe the heavy ritualistic rock incantations of this LP just summoned a demon from the deepest pits of Hades into my den. He's now fucking my ottoman.

Ben + Vesper "All This Could Kill You" (Sounds Familyre" POB 225 Clarksboro NJ 08020) All this could anesthetize you.

Beneficence "Vocal Sport" (Ozone, Meccamedia.net) Righteous, nuanced, excellent hip hop with laid back lyrical dexterity. Though I would like to note that despite it being the accepted term for a spoken interlude between featuring, I don't think the term "Skit" is appropriate for an answering machine message of a friend's distressed eulogy for deceased X-Clan emcee Professor X. Great album art with Beneficence posing as Jack Johnson, also referencing the Bob Dylan "Hurricane" single, which is appropriate.

Alec Berlin "beauty, grazing at the trough" (alecberlin.com) I like Alec! Cute, weird little nasal ditties that are deceptively heavy and entirely contagious.

Besmirchers "Besmirch and Destroy" (Steel Cage POB 29247 Philadelphia PA 19125) if this ultra-ugly, super nasty punk band was a woman your dick would fall off after fucking her. And you would staple it back on and go again, because this is the good stuff despite the damage!

Best of the Glen Campbell Music Show DVD (RPM) Great songs, great voice, great performances, great era for filming music. Not the greatest archival quality prints, but I guess the faded film stock is now the official look of the 70s.

Best Zine Ever (Microcosm) Comic-centric zine reviews by people who actually read everything all the way through and think about it. And know how to actually make a zine.

Betty Paginated zine (POB A1412 Sydney South, NSW 1235 AUSTRALIA) You had me at porno and wrestling. But with this fine zine's recent full-on swan dive into the world of comic books (especially belovedly crappy 70s and 80s stuff) I'm damn near ready to make like Nemo's dad and swim straight to Sydney.

Bevel "Phoenician terrane" (Contraphonic POB 2203 Chicago, IL 60690) This reminded me of reading a collection of dreary short stories that you couldn't put down because the beauty of the writing trumped the misery.

Biffy Clyro "Puzzle" (Roadrunner) Iffy.

Birdie "Catherine Avenue" (Love Minus Zero) If this glorious music is for the birds, I'm growing a beak! The ballads are sweet, but when the tempo gets crankin these simultaneously spare and lush concoctions had me drunk with happy.

Birds of Avalon "Bazaar Bazaar" (Volvom 1740 Monrovia Ave Costa Mesa CA 92627) Beards of Awesome-men!

Birgit "True Stories I Made Up" (Zip 116 New Montgomery St. suite 200 SF, CA 94105) This lovely Amsterdame borrows some Kate Bush phrasing (made extra clear by a cover song) but aims more squarely for slick lush radio pop. Well, I dig pretty ladies singing in awkward English as much as anyone, so I endorse this, but I expect that neither the Aguilera's or Enya's of the world are sweating this release.

Sir Richard Bishop "Polythestic Fragments" (Drag City) Guitariffic! *(Hey, was that the sound of Roctober getting dropped from the Drag City promo list? Damn!)*

Alyse Black "Too Much Too Lovely" (alyseblack.com) Whenever we get a CD with a soft focused, tasteful picture of a pretty woman on the front, and she's just performing under her own name, I always brace myself for the worst coffeehouse singer songriterisms. So I was beyond surprised when the Lilith Fair-vibe was nowhere to be found on this disc, as Black boldly channels Bjork, Billie, and Bush (Kate, not GW). Best yet, this jazzy, arty, oddball epic also sounds like Alyse Black more than any of her influences.

Blackalicious "4/20 Live in Seattle" (MVD) This concert film demonstrates that this hip hop act has a nice live instrumental/DJ combo backing them up, but it didn't convince me that the band wouldn't sound better without the nerdy raps mucking up the mix. And judging by the crowd, apparently despite their name they only have Whitealicious fans. And despite the 4/20 reference, even when I got super high I didn't find this interesting. But in the interviews the dudes are super charming, so I hope a lot of people buy this. I just hope they don't all ask me to watch it with them.

Black Beauties "Catch A Beat" (Full Breach Kicks" (2060 N California Ave Chicago IL 60647) The reason this stellar trash rock band sings in such a snotty voice is likely because they are misusing those cases of Sudafed I keep sending them. Dudes...it can also clear up mucus!

Black Before Red "Belgrave to King's Circle" (In Eat Records) So indie it made my teeth hurt.

The Black Dahlia Murder "Nocturnal" (Metal Blade) Sonically sliced my genitals to ribbons.

Black Lips "Wildmen in Action" DVD (Munster) Some hold this trash blues band up to be the saviors or rock n roll, and I'm more hesitant than those prophets, but I'm quick to admit that this well shot concert DVD is a pretty convincing argument for Black Lips as the Moses-es of garage trash. There's also some nice ugliness in their interactions with the fans that borders on Axl Rose vs. the audience-greatness.

Black Tie "Goodbye, Farewell" (Socyermom.com) Dreamy...if you have very slow, bordering on dreary, dreams.

Black Tie Review "Code Fun" (Gearhead) Despite its Eastness I always like to think of Pittsburgh as sorta Midwestern. So what if there's a mountain or two here and there, the Rustbelt going through Ohio clearly extends to Steeltown, and honestly is Pittsburgh more like NYC or Cleveland? Well, the Rustbelt is one thing, but with this stellar release the Skinny Tie-belt has officially been extended into Pennsylvania as power pop this powerful and popish has to geographically connect to Zion and Rockford. This is as seductively fun as guitar-driven, keyboard enhanced, bubbly vocal perfected music is gonna get!

Blanket of M "Karnevil," "Cotton Candy Autopsy" (OBZ Records, myspace.cpm/blanketofm) Gloriously lumbering evil lo-fi punk messes that will leave your ears uncleanable.

Bloodshot Bill "Trashy Greasy Rockin' Billy" (Flying Saucer Records, www.flyingsaucerrecords.com, www.bloodshotbill.com bloodshotbill@hotmail.com) Rockabilly 101 is now in session! Lesson # 1: Remember that it's cool to do your hair up high and sport your cat clothes and shit, BUT the hair and clothes don't play, OK? Lesson # 2: LOSE the standup bass. They're like assholes, everybody's got one. Lesson #3: BURN your Stray Cats albums, or at least take advantage of the fact that there's a SICK number of GREAT Rockabilly reissues out there, and you'll find yourself no longer needing The Stray Cats for inspiration. The same goes for Big Sandy. While he's a great guy, and has always had fine musicians in his band, he's NOT the Rockabilly template, and I don't think even he would argue that point. Hell, if you wanna go all So-Cal on my ass, start with The Paladins, who've only been kickin' ass for 25 years! Social Distortion, you ask? They have about as much to do with Rockabilly as Haile Selassie had to do with feeding his people. Even Deke Dickerson, one of the most accessible non-suck purveyors of the genre (as well as several others) was reportedly booed and heckled while touring with Mike Ness. Heed your queen, Poison Ivy, when she says: "There's no excuse for not having good influences" Lesson #4: Pick up on THIS good shit. Bloodshot Bill adheres to the old "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" theory, but, he adds, "FUCK IT UP SOME MORE!!!" Actually, NO ONE would accuse Bloodshot Bill of being subtle, but he's changed his sound around just enough that it gets more interesting with each new release (kinda like The Ramones in their heyday). This one proves to be abrasive, yet easy to listen to, and shake it around a bit. I think it's beautiful that all you young parents are playing The Ramones to your kids, but, play 'em this, too. They'll be switchin' in the kitchen in no time! There's an innocence here that's sorely lacking in today's "Underground" music that you can zero right in on, BUT, Bloodshot Bill forgot more that a lot of your slick-ass 'Billy bands will ever know about dynamics. He's coming into his own as both a guitarist and a drummer (retraction time: It turns out B.B.'s Bon Frere, Johnny Montreal, IS playing standup bass on several of these tracks....the cool part is, you'd never know), and, best of all, he's employing more of a "Cramps"-like Garage guitar sound on this effort. Remember, kids, lovin' Rockabilly, but not Garage, is like lovin' your Dad, but not your Mom. *Waymon Timbsdale, and his pal, Gentleman John Battles (one half of the Canadian/American stuporgroup, Bloodshot Battles Overdrive) rebuke the recent ruling that, if further enforced, will keep our friend, Bloodshot Bill, from performing in the U.S.for five years. These views do not necessarily reflect those of Roctober magazine and it's contributors....Though they might.*

Bloody & the Transfusions (Black & Blue POB 410325 Cambridge MA 02141) Pure trashy rock n roll perfection. Spare, nasty, powerful and pummeling, this is ridiculously righteous. Bloody Mess is a local legend around here and we cannot tell you how happy we are to hear, in a manner delightfully detriemental to our ear drums, that he is still doing damage.

Blowfly "Punk Rock Party" (Alternative Tentacles alternativetentacles.com) Blowfly – I love you...in concept. And I love that finding a home on a punk label inspired an album of Blowfly's signature 3- grade-humor level dirty song parodies of punk classics ("I Wanna Be Felated," "V.D. Party"). And I actually laughed out loud at the purity of the absurdity of the Clash parody "Should I Fuck This Big Fat Ho." But this album ultimately is pretty bad, especially when it is padded out by some parodies of non-classic punk songs, some non-Blowfly passages, and numerous clean versions (?). Perhaps the oddest thing on this is that Jello joins the Fly for a parody of "Holiday in Cambodia," but because of the Dead Kennedy's legal situation, the song can't actually have music that sounds like the original song. That is so sad and wrong on so many levels that I actually got a headache. So it has different music and different lyrics...what is this, an R. Kelly remix? Oh wait, the song is actually about R. Kelly. Maybe that is clever?

Blowtops "P.S. This Is A Zombie" (Big Neck POB 8144 Reston VA 20165) Archival unreleased Blowtops music that is so exciting it should be called Blowwads! Clean recordings make these anthems of evil seem like profound sermons.

Blue Cheer "What Doesn't Kill You..." (Rain Man) Any super veteran band that has been out of the spotlight for a while that wants to come back with a new album that's a solid notch on the discography bedpost and not an outdated or too modern embarrassment should follow the Blue Cheer blueprint. After touring like 17 year olds for a coupla years playing every honkytonk and dive that would have them Dickie and company certainly reconnected with what rock n roll is supposed to be all about, and its reflected here. This may be bombastic bar rock, but it's the best bombastic bar rock your ringing ears will feast upon in 2007!

Blues, Rags and Hollers: The Koerner, Ray and Glover Story DVD (MVD) Apparently, this documentary on pioneers of the 60s folk-blues revival was done on video for public access or something and expanded over the years (with the same budgetary restrictions). But don't let the production values fool you. These gentlemen are fascinating because they are full of great stories and bursting with musical talent. The three traditionalist virtuosos did their thing at a time when their thing seemed like the next big thing, allowing them to record for major labels and tour the country with the greats, yet the heart of this piece is the 90s reunions and performances which show as much heart and love as anything they did in their supposed heyday.

The Bluetones (Cooking Vinyl POB 246 Huntington NY 11732) Sounds like the fake band in a movie. I like the fake band in a movie.

Harlan T. Bobo "I'm Your Man" (Goner) The most elegant, dignified, beautiful album ever released by Goner. Apparently their A&R department couldn't find any more self-destructive, trashy, speaker-busting, lo fi miscreants, so they settled for a classy, quirky, pop craftsman whose music made a better man out of me. For this, Monsieur Bobo, I salute thee.

The Boils "Hockey Anthems" (TKO 8941 Atlanta Ave #505 Huntington Beach CA92646) Pucking brilliant! Oi songs about hockey! Hockey hooligans unite!

Bomb New York 11 (Slusaj Najglasnije!) Over 10,000 songs by 8,000 bands somehow squeezed onto one disc! A miracle!

The Bongos "Drums Along the Hudson" (Cooking Vinyl) A deluxe reissue of the best album by these Jersey popsters who sorta seemed REM-big at the dawn of the 80s if you went by college radio airplay. While the track that got the spins was "The Bullrushes," our vote always went to "In the Congo," which has a Romantics pop-punk vibe, and helped out in grammar school by teaching us the phrase "natural predators." This features unreleased stuff, Their first live gig, two live in London songs, and a new version of "Bullrushes" with Moby sitting in.

Bonk "Bonk Against Nothing" (Ace Fu POB 552 NYC 10009) Boldly awesome, this is a mighty rock record that throws everything at the wall, it all sticks, and your wall is better for the damage.

The Book of Lists (Scratch 726 Richards St. Vancouver BC Canada V6B 3A4) Sounds like a ballsy Morrissey.

Boris with Michio Kurihara "Rainbow" (Drag City) First of all, needless to say, this is CD better suited for real record reviewers than for I. Just the concept of a collaboration between critical genuflectees Boris (Japanese guitar prog powerhouses) and Ghost (Japanese ethereal sound makers extraordinaire) is almost too much for my garage rock damaged brain to handle. However, as Ghost's main man Michio actually seems to have reigned these monsters of mayhem in, surprisingly moreso than Mr. Merzbow or Sun0))) did, this is actually the mind blowing chill out album of the year, as it somehow achieves mellowness despite featuring a wall of thundering guitar sounds. Did not Bore Us.

Bottom of the Hudson "Fantastic Hawk" (Absolutely Kosher 1412 10- St. Berkeley CA 94710) Should be called Top of the AWESOME!

Meredeth Bragg "Silver Sonya" (The Kora Records) A Boy Named Meredith has a lot to Bragg about as this sounds like Paul Simon and Jose Gonzalez had a music baby!

Breadfoot "Tea with Leo" (Jeeziepeezie 123 South 4- Apt. 1 Brooklyn NY 11211) Borefoot.

The Breakout Society "nobody likes a winner" (Get Hip) Should be called The Greatshout Society because this contagious retro-pop (including some "bop bop bad a da das" thrown in there) makes we want to shout, "This is great!"

The Brian Wilson Shock Treatment "Saviours of Rock," "Lords of the Infinite Cosmos" EP (BWST POB 1058 New Paltz NY 12561) Unbelievably potent, full-on damaging, insanely overmodulated, enticingly throbbing super rock! This sounds like the "Kick Out the Jams" album on much more powerful drugs than the MC5 had access to. Awesome, awesome album!

The Briefs "The Greatest Story Ever Told" DVD/CD (BYO) The Briefs have always been our faves around here, symbolizing the kind of bands Dirtnap Records championed – joyful punk that combines pop, new wave, garage rock, and balls to the wall dedication in a way that separates them by miles from the pop punk whiners. But would they make good fodder for a full-length documentary? Oh yeah, we had forgot, they were signed for some absurd reason to a major label at the tail end of the punk major label signings era and got to go on massive tours of Europe (though the record never came out, for a variety of reasons, with the label, incredibly, citing September 11 as one of them). Even with these tales of major label inanity this doesn't quite give *Triumph of the Will* or *Nanook of the North* a run for their docu-money, but fans of the band will be delighted by the copious amounts of musical mayhem, including more live footage, no budget music videos, recording studio goofiness, and audio potpourri than you can shake a pair of goofy New Wave sunglasses at. Also includes interviews with a sexy rat puppet and hotel room shenanigans that would confuse and disappoint even a Led Zeppelin tribute band. Watch this and you will be fully Briefed!

Brighton MA (Loose Tooth 1426 W. Balmoral Ave. #2 Chicago IL 60640) Brightened my mass!

George Brigman "Rags in Skull," "Blowing Smoke" b/w "Drifting" (Bona Fide POB 185 Red Lion PA 17356) Though this artist recorded (in unjust obscurity) thirty years ago, it is fair to say he only recently emerged, as recent reissues of his timeless, dynamic, powerful guitar rock are the first most of us have ever heard of the Brig Man. What's most amazing is that this 2007 recording is as otherwordly and weird and unplaceable (is this from the 60s? 70s? 1800s?) as any of his classic material. This is a true rock *artist!* For collectors out there, also check out the 45, which is an original from '77 in a new sleeve!

Brock (Myspace.com/brockmusic1) Rock!

Cary Brothers "Who Are You" (Bluhammock) Very Boreers.

Tim Buckley "my fleeting house" DVD (MVD) Unlike the cheapo (though great) documentary DVD's usually released by MVD, this is a s good as you're going to get on the elusive, departed Buckley. Interviews with his musical collaborators and biographer frame fantastic full length performance clips from American and European TV shows, including some programs that genuinely pushed the artistic limits of TV rock (and not in a cheesy German chromakey way, but with brilliant camerawork and editing). One disappointment is that in a TV interview with Steve Allen (where Buckley surprisingly seems to be bullshiting Allen and Meadows about how brilliant he thinks Allen's songwriting is as the elder couple tries to talk hep) is not accompanied by Buckley's performance on that show. Otherwise this is an amazingly convincing DVD that presents both Buckley's straighter stuff and more experimental music is a wonderful, enriching way.

Richard Buckner "Meadow" (Merge) Buck me gently!

The Bugs (Listen Loudest) I bugged out listening to this awesome rock n roll excursion. I wish this band played my prom.

Burden Brothers "Mercy" (Kirtland 3100 Main St. suite 347 Dallas TX 75226) Oh brother, this was a burden to listen to.

Solomon Burke "The King Live At Avo Session Basel" (MVD) Drawing from classic material and his recent hipster-crossover albums, the Behemoth of Soul demonstrates a magical voice that could charm, chill, or cold clock anyone with even half a functioning earhole. Note that this DVD features an entire concert, meaning the 12-minute instrumental vamp before he shuffles throneward, musical numbers from two of his 1,263 children, and an extended sing-along by the audience after he lumbers off. But excise those 25 minutes and you have nearly an hour of pure soul genius.

"Burning Sound Vol. 1" (Burning Sound Terreaux 27 2300 La Chaux-De-Fonds Switzerland) Not sure exactly what Swiss banking account is hiding all the trash rock genius form the rest of the world, but it's amazing how much twisted, nasty blues rocking insanity comes from the land of holey cheeses. Boneshakers, Guitar Fucker, Roy and the Devil's Motorcycle, and Green Fairy are the standouts here, but all these bands put marshmallows in my cocoa!

Bob Burns and the Breakups "Terminal Breakdown" (Gearhead POB 1386 Woodland CA 95776) This rock n roll rave up break down tear up music is so intense I got a rock hernia dancing it!

Bush Tetras "Very Very Happy" (ROIR POB 501 Prince Street Station NYC 10012) Though it takes a few tracks before the true scrambles and stutters take effect, when these No Wave veterans hit their stride on this new release they make it clear just how brilliant they were and are. When a band is this futuristic it's impossible for them to be backward-looking or nostalgic.

The Busy Signals (Dirtnap) Pop punk so wiry and ornery it could actual beat you up (most pop punk can't throw a decent punch).

The Butcher Shop (Bang) This compiles, in reverse chronological order, the late 80s Kid Congo/Tex Perkins collaboration EP and the subsequent early 90s Congo-free long-player. Surprisingly, I liked the later stuff better, as it had more oomph and cohesion. This ominous rock is described by Perkins in the liner notes as "proto-grunge," and I am surprised to find myself agreeing with that title and still digging the Buthcher's meat.

The Byrds Under Review DVD (MVD) Not sure why this in so long (over three hours, while most of these lo-fi documentaries are 70-100 minutes), but maybe because the pure Americaness of the Byrds really amuses these Brit filmmakers. Also, they really take the time to dwell on each release, and also seem pretty pleased that they have some actual Byrds (though not the ones you're thinking of now. Not that one either. No...name another one...) plus the always funny Van Dyke Parks on hands.

Cake On Cake "I Guess I Was Dreaming" (Desolation) If Brian Wilson was Swedish, female, thinner, classically trained, sane, had a better haircut, was a prettier singer, and had a more genuine sense of wonder, then it's unlikely we would have entered the Iraq War (not sure exactly why that would be, but it's like that butterfly wing/tidal wave thing). There's no telling how many wars this stellar chanteuse has prevented!

Campamento Mec Nec "presents alimana" (Gracias) Crazy good crazy exciting crazy sounding crazy music. Yet it's the sanest sounds I've ever heard!

Canadian Rifle "Cinder Block" EP (Criminal I.Q. 3501 N. Southport Ave Chicago, IL 60657) Should be called Canadian Riff-les, because these riffs rock!

Canned Hamm and Friends "Sincerely Christmas" (Pro-Am 11-1266 6 Ave Vancouver BC 6H 1A5) Certainly countless bands have cashed in on their popularity by releasing a quickee X-mas album, doubtlessly inferior to their regular records. However, few bands have the tencity and balls to un-cash in on their unpopularity by releasing an X-mas album that, while still not as good as their holiday-free CDs, is still pretty fucking cherry. An anti-Christmas parade song, multiple Sex-Mas songs, a killer hip hop track by Little baby Jesus, and Neil Hamburger's nihlism all make this CD worth not punching a hole in to turn it into an ornament. I especially love Hamster Hamm, their rodent buddy who sounds like Alvin but instead of being a trickster is just an extremely responsible nag. *That's* funny! And that's what Christmas is really about, isn't it?

Carbon 14 magazine (POB 29247 Philadelphia PA 19125) Lowbrow painters and trash rock and wrestling managers – the trifecta of cool in magazine form!

The Caribbean "Populations" (Hometapes POB 7563 Boulder CO 80306) The Cariboring.

Carp 18 "Bug Rump" (Rough Fish POB 21568 Minneapolis MN 55421) Dead fish.

Johnny Cash "The Man The World His Music" DVD (Cherry Red Films) This is one of my favorite music movies ever, with Cash and June Carter at their peak traveling the land, playing stellar shows, meeting their fans, hanging with their family, and bonding with Native Americans. I challenge anyone to watch this impressionistic, sincere, powerful documentary (a real product of the early 70s progressive wave of American filmmaking) and not declare Cash to be cooler than Jesus. Note: even on this high class reissue DVD the film still looks, as it has in every print or VHS copy I've ever seen, like your dog chewed on it.

Cashiers du Cinemart zine (impossiblyfunky.com) In this age of disappearing print zines it is great (after a long wait) to see our favorite film mag back, with its righteous indignations and obsessions with obscurities intact. This issue has them railing against decades worth of *Superman Returns* script drafts, unaired TV pilots, and just about every James Ellroy movie ever produced or not produced (and that's in a tribute/love-fest piece). Best features: a short interview with sitcom go-to guy Taylor Negron and a semi-triumphant account of the editor getting to write DVD liner notes for his fave film, *Black Shampoo*.

Joe Cassady and the West End Sound "...present What's Your Sign?" (Avenue A POB 51 High Bridge NJ 08829) David Cassidy wishes he sounded like this. And if Joe Cassay wishes he sounded like Lou Reed sitting in at a blues bar he got his wish.

Caterpillar Tracks "Scrape the Summer" (Phraty POB 14267 Cincinatti OH 45250) Enjoyably difficult bug rock that combines math, insectology, chemistry, and Grad School English.

Chalk "The Hyperventilating Culture" (TokyoRose 4222 Chambers Cincinatti OH 45223) If you invented robots and ran Joy Division and New Order CDs instead of the software and let them watch "Weird Science" and Top of the Pops reruns, you WISH they would play music this good.

Champion Kickboxer "Perforations" (54 40 or Fight) This ponder-rock band's vocalist somehow makes English sound like Japanese better than anyone else I've ever heard!

Charlemagne "We can build an island" (SideCho 2698 Juniper Ave Ste. 101A Signal Hill, CA 90755) Charmingman!

Chelsea "Faster, Cheaper & Better looking" (TKO) A band still in possession of the best English accent snarl in pub punk! I really like this album, and if you disagree you're a poser.

Billy Chernoff "A Better Way," "Life Song Revelations" (billychernoff.com) Slick, though traditional and relatively spare, Nashville country, and country gospel that is sincere, straightforward, and sung in a fresh, unaffected voice that conveys both a sense of wisdom and a sense of naiveté.

Marlon Cherry "Ancient Sound, Modern Dance" (Fang POB 652 NYC 10009) Drum-driven Acid Worldbeat that's *totally cherry!*

Cheyenne "The Whale" (cheyennesongs.net) CheYEAH! CheYAY! CheYIPPEE! Indie Folk that's peppy!

Chooglin' (www.chooglin.net) Good-assed name, because these chooglers are the chooglingest motherfuckers that ever choogled! And in case you don't know what chooglin; is, it's some *hard* boogie. And by that I don't mean something that will cause a nosebleed when you dislodge it from your nostril. Or do I?

Chord Easy zine (Light Living Library POB 190 Philomath OR 97370-0190) A new system for learning guitar is laid out for the masses to drink in!

ChtoniC "Seediq Bale" (Down Port/Tra 1510 Eddy St. suite #805 SF, CA 94115) Over the top extreme Metal madness that goes in every, creepy, dynamic and evil direction at one time and implodes in an orgasm of brutality!

The Chubbies "The Official Greatest Hits" (kitten next door, myspace.com/thechubbies) Not the greatest nor exactly hits, but if the hard touring Chubbies (at least it seemed like they were here a lot) were on the bill you were in for a decent show and this is a solid collection of what is basically a one woman band with a rotating support cast. Little known fact: the band's name is short for Carnivorous Humanoid Underground Big Boned Invincible Exoskeleton-ed Snakoids.

Chuck Dukowski Sextet "Reverse the Polarity" (Nice and Friendly) The sophomore effort of this ambitious act shows some great growth. Moving away from the debut's free jazz leanings and the gimmicks (they covered a Black Flag song on that one), this has some powerful guitar explorations and some serious stabs at atmospheric soundscapes. Most importantly, vocalist Lora Norton has found a voice that is a much more organic fit with the music, never straining or getting melodramatic or actor-ish, as she sometimes did on the last albuym. Here her rich vox perfectly compliments the heavy sound flow.

The CIA Makes Science Fiction Unexciting #4 (Microcosm) My fave CIA ish yet, as before reading this concise overview of the ugliness I had never even heard of the Puerto Rican upstart who our government assassinated.

The Cinematics "A Strange Education," "Break" (TVT) The Geniusmatics!

Clemente "...whilst honey hurts" (Moodswing) Like their almost namesake Clamato, I could only swallow this if LOTS of Budweiser were mixed in.

The Clerics "magnae quassationes" (Rooster Cow, roostercow.com) If you don't dig this smart rocking combo then you have made a Cleric-al error!

The Clorox Girls "J'aime Les Filles" (BYO POB 67609 LA, CA 90067) The Bomp-est record ever to not be on Bomp! You could fool a lot of collectors by subtracting 30 years from the release date and charging 180 dollars for the album!

Coasterinkin comix, ***Midas*** comix (UFA, jmitchellny@earthlink.net) Shithead and Suerte, two cartoonists resolute on swiping Cheech Wizard comix style (and head condition) back from vintage graffiti artists, and snatching a few tagger wrist moves along with it, unleash two more mighty mini comix. The former is a collection of coaster and cocktail napkin sketches, and if you assume this will look like R. Crumb's napkin/menu anthology, recall that Crumb wasn't shitfaced when doodling. The latter collects music themed comix, some from the pages of *Roctober*. Fortunately we believe in the conflicting of our interests, so we'll say, IT RULES!

Jeff Coffey "Long Way Home" (POB 520008 Longwood FL 32752) Should be called Jeff Decaffeinated.

Coffinberry "God Dam Dogs" (Morphius 100 E. 23· St Baltimore MD 21218) Not to be confused with the failed Count Chocula breakfast cereal spinoff, this group of whole grain rockers puts the actual rock into indie rock and crafts an album worth listening to a lot.

Leonard Cohen – Under Review 1934-1977 DVD (Sexy Intellectual) I've decided that my favorite talking heads in the *Under Review* music documentary series are the schoolteachers and academics who either taught the musicians as schoolchildren or interpret their work from the ivory towers. Somehow they are either so much more full of shit or so much less full of shit than the music critics that they seem refreshing. Thus, the opening passages of this film where Cohen's pre-music writing career are discussed are some of my favorites, and they convincingly establish the foundation Cohen built his odd rock n roll career upon. While there's predictably way too much attention given to his one getting-head-from-a-famous-broad lyric, overall, this documentary's structure of going album by album through his career serves him far better than other artists, as each of his early albums were so strange and groundbreaking (though few chose to trod upon the broken ground). Also note: he didn't die in 1977. Though they usually title these to give the years of the career covered, they seem to have slipped up here.

Cola Wars "Red Flag Day" (colawars.net) Rotted my teeth.

Dustin Cole with the Specialest "Try and Love Me" (Scratch) Eerie electronic sea shantys that could turn the table on Sirens and mermaids.

Wesley Coleman "Summer of '79" ep (Boomchick 6405 Morrill Ave Havelock NE 68507) Should be called Wesley COOLman. A strangely perfect punch of rock n roll.

Ken Collier "Love To Play" (myspace.com/kencollierosngs) Collier is cooler than most of the rootsy rockers out there, and any one who sings a dishwasher love song gets two sudsy thumbs up in this former pearl diver's book!

Ian Collins "The Map is not the Territory" (cio-music.com) Jangles with your chimes as it wrangles with your mind!

Paul Collins Beat "Flying High" (Get Hip) Paul Cornball.

Colossus "...and the Rift of the Pan-Dimensional Undergods" (Lucid) If these guys were joking this would suck, but clearly no one would be this dedicated to metal, including not only the beloved N.W.O.B.H.M. style, but also every epic, overdramatic, quite frankly uncool style from the last 35 years of extreme music, unless they LOVED metal. These motherfuckers are *serious!*

Communique "Walk Into the Light" (Sabot POB 28 Gainesville FL 32602) I don't care how many bands make 80s-ish New Wavey British drama pop...I am always a sucker for it! But with the flood of this stuff out there maybe they should be called Commcommon, as unique they are not. But AWESOMEique they are!

Complicated Drumming Technique – Jens Hannemann DVD (Drag City) Normally it would be an insult to say that the funniest thing on a comedy DVD was the text on the box, but Jens' fields of expertise (rudiments, drum notation, stick inbspection, equipment rental etiquette, orchestral drumming, constructive criticism of other drummers) is fucking hilarious, and the perfect list of bands Jens has "asked to record with" was just one spot on choice after another. Al Dimeola...Jeff Healy...311...Keb Mo...perfect! And the promise of Full-Color DVD label as a special feature got me too. But everything encoded beneath said Full Color label was damn funny too, as Fred Armisen's parody of instructional videos, and of fusion jazz dudes, was wicked funny. While the concept of a indeterminately European artiste sitting behind a kit the size of a Catholic Wisconsin family and instructing us about time signatures that bend the space time continuum is funny in itself, it's the little things that kill. The joy and pride the Jens Hannemann combo feels as they laugh after successfully "jamming," and the one second where (during a mini-Trenchmouth reunion) bass player Wayne uses his instrument to fruitlessly cue a rhytmically challenged drum tech where to come in instigated two of the purest laughs I've enjoyed all year. During the writer's strike they should just have Jens come on *Saturday Night Live* each week and jam for 90 minutes.

Complicated Shirt "Compromising Compositions" (Alone/NFI) Shirts hurt. But pants dance!

Concentrick "Aluminum Lake" (Drag City) Concentr – *echhh!*

The Condors "Wait For It" (RankOutsiderRecords.com) This is the kind of pure American wholesome no bullshit party rock n roll that this country was built on!

The Conformists "Three Hundred" (54 40 or Fight) Sounds like they are building something out of music wood.

Bobby Conn "King For A Day" (Thrill Jockey, Box 08038 Chicago IL 60608) "On The Farm" b/w "Don't Worry" (Bec-Rec, bec-rec.com) Though Conn is often reduced by lazy listeners as being a re-creationist of Bowie's glam persona, this is perhaps the most anti-glitz album ever made by a man swathed in sparkly textiles and eyeliner. Though his voice and the lush arrangements may seem comparable to Ziggy Stardust, the painful references to defeat, failure, and the mundanity of life are more akin to the travails a far shorter, more bulbous-nosed Ziggy. The gloriously debauched tone of the title track may make it one of Conn's best tunes ever, but it is the b-chorus about returning to work on Monday, that makes it genuinely outstanding. Keeping the pity party rocking is Conn's new single wherein he either champions or chump-ians the joys of farm life (in terms of anti-Urban-ism) and on the flip bitches about having time to bitch. Stellar apokittylyptic cover art makes this spinner a winner!

Cooler By The Lake (Rorylakepresents.com) This CD/DVD showcases the hard rocking glory of a band of a man who unquestionably is as funny as anyone could possibly be wearing those novelty redneck fake teeth. Highlight is documentary footage of Rory negotiating with a booker after headliners Asia request that openers CBTL play without a drummer so as to fit all 17 of Asia's keyboards on stage. Cooler's song about Japan is, by the way, better than any Asia song, despite the actual Asia encompassing the actual Japan.

Patrick Cornell "This Much is True" (POB 46792 LA, CA 90046) Should be called Partrick CornHELL, because this is a hell of a great record!

Cosmic Ballroom "Your Drug of Choice," "Stoned, Broke & Ready To Rumble" (Locomotive) Sleazy, easy, delightful, awesome rock 'n' roll!

Crackhouse Midwife "Rat Salad" (POB 18 Roanoke VA 24002) No Fi, deep fried, probably high, and punch-you-in-the-eye inbred punk madness!

Crawlspace "The Spirit of '76" (Gulcher) A Gizmo-related bluesy artpunk covers album/novelty music extravaganza. How many of those phrases don't fit together? I think this has a Cunts cover, which may be first.

The Cribs "Men's Needs, Women's Needs Whatever" (Warner Brothers) Cribbling.

Criminally Yours zine (Eight-Stone Press POB 11064 Baltimore, MD 21212) A crime-in-Baltimore themed literary equivalent of a jam comic. Few essays here would stand up alone, but as a whole this gives a pretty clear picture of why people dig B-town. And why its inhabitants make good victims.

Crimson Sweet "Wired for the Last Move" b/w "Basement Star" (Slow Gold Zebra POB 20506 Tompkins Sq Sta. NYC 10009) Best. Band. Ever.

Cro-Mags "The Final Quarrel: Live at CBGB 2001" (MVD) Though never a fan of the manly NYCHC scene, I do love both Cro-Mags classic records and went to see Harley, John, and whomever else was in the band a lot, including a reunion that must have been a show within a year of this concert. Yet I recall liking that show, and this is dreary, joyless, and kind of sad. Sorry Krishnas.

Cry Apache Blood "Industry Mixtape Volume 1" (Ghetto Pagoda) Rocks with machete-like brutality.

Sam Cubbage "Dare To Dream" (Troubadour Records 243 Fleece's Den Lane Berkeley Springs WV 25411) Cubbage's dedication to classic honkytonk is more than admirable; it's sincere to the point of turning any CD player into a roadhouse jukebox!

Culture Queer "Supersize It Under Pontius Pilate" (Tokyo Rose) Decadent dance glam that made me want to get a penicillin shot and some tight shiny pants. Made me buy-curious --- I want to know where to buy all their records!

The Cynics "Here We Are" (Get Hip) After putting out only 97 albums the Cynics have finally successfully become British! And successfully muddled the time continuum so that it's forever 196∞! Less trashes, more smashes!

Dagger zine (POB 820102 Portland OR 97282) Writing about rock that I actually want to read!

Jeff Dahl "Battered Stuff" (Steel Cage) If you could batter the purity of Dahl's rock 'n' roll magic and deep fry it (and maybe put it on a stick) you would revolutionize carnival food *forever!*

Dan Dailey "One Sided Love Affair" "Walk Into the Light"(dwdailey.com) If you like your guitar rocking, spare, poppy indie-cool and confident, than take this Dan daily!

The Daily Void "Identification Code" (Dead Beat) Evil destructive dark, terrifying art punk that sounds like their guitar strings are made from the dried intestines of an eviscerated Cerberus hell dog.

Danger Is My Middle Name "Revenge on the Radio" (dimmn.com) "Awesome" is their first and last name! Awesome Danger Awesome.

The Dangermen "The Dark Place" (Merenoise, merenoise.net) Rocking rock that rocks!

Dark Fog (Original Sound Recordings 6627 S. Woodlawn Chicago, Illinois 60637) I'll tell you the truth, right now, I'm IN a dark fog...I stayed up too late last night, though for no good reason. One of my so-called friends just had to paraphrase Little Richard on my answering machine, "It's Saturday night, betcha ain't gettin' LAID." Man, tell me something I DON'T know...but, Original Sound Recordings were nice enough to brighten up a dark day by sending me not only the new Dark Fog CD, but a mini glitter-lava lamp that changes colors, with the band's name at the base. Talk about bribing the judge! Well, I'm finding this perfect music for trying not to get bummed out about Valentine's Day, but, failing, anyway. So, I'm running a hot bath (which my ex tried to tell me was "Immasculine," whatever), just to relax what's left of my mind...At first, I hear, well, what else? A dark fog! A viscous, if only partly coherent layer of murky, cloudy, barely determinable, haze of multilayered feedback. At first, I'm reminded of their playfriends (In Free Games for May), Plastic Crimewave Sound, but they eventually reach a bit of clarity, at least, enough to not make me think "More Japanese Noise wannabees. Oh, boy.."...These guys, like Plastic Crimewave, have SONGS, but, they come and go. Not a putdown, just an observation. They get all dreamy and trippy at times, but they can rock out with their cocks out, given the motivation. Speaking of which, I'm getting out of the bath, now. You're probably glad you're not here...I had a headache, suddenly, midway through this thing (not their fault, I've been getting 'em for weeks), but it seems OK, now. Thought I heard the phone ring twice, too. Man, the power of suggestion! My neighbor's kids upstairs have either stopped stomping on the floor and dragging their biggest toys all across their apartment (don't get me wrong, I love those kids, but they don't get outside enough), or the hypnotic drone and occasionally plummeting beats on this CD have hindered my ability to notice or care...I DO care that my lava lamp is already busted, but, just like getting bummed out about Valentines Day (wouldn't you know, the girl I've been hung up on had the nuts to call me and ask me if I get depressed on V-Day?), I only have myself to blame. Have you ever seen a painting of an iceberg, and known that the artist caught the image while it slowly began to melt, and YET, there's all these different colors in and amongst the ice and snow, as though someone had thrown stage lights directly on it, as it melts in shades of green, blue, orange, but, mainly grey and white? Well, that's what this CD sounds like...

Dark Funeral "Vobiscum Satanas" "The Secrets of the Black Arts" "Diabolis Interium," "Attera Orbis Terrarum Part 1" DVD (Regain) These CDs unleash Sweden's extremest exports with digital remastering, rarity bonus tracks, and more demonic howling than most mortals can handle. One of my fave aspects of these evil-mongers is that something about their songs grounds Hell in reality: the drums always sound real (not robotic), the guitars have expressive tone (not just a roar) and the vocals actually strain and have dynamics (not just generic monster sounds). Most outstanding is the new double CD that features three recent epic concerts but also tons of bonus footage including clips from their first show. This will melt your corpsepaint.

Dark Little Rooms "Foolish Beauty" (blindsearrecords.com) Experimundane.

Dash Rip Rock "Hee Haw Hell" (Alternative Tentacles) More rip than rock.

Dat'r "Turn Up the Ghosts" (Hush) Grooviest ghosts since the Funky Phantom! Though I think robots would like this music more than ghosts. Or Martians. Or me!

Billie Davis "Whatcha Gonna Do?" (RPM) Davis did the song "Tell Him" (you know, "Tell him that you're never gonna leave him/tell him that you're always gonna love him/tell him tell him tell him tell him right now") in 1963, and recorded a ton of lesser known but utterly pleasant girl pop singles in the sixties making up the bulk of this comp. But buy this for an unreleased – for a reason – live mini set that kicks off this CD. Davis is doing some gig singing her peppy pop songs and the drummer apparently thinks pop music is beneath him so, after warming up with a few over ambitious fills on the first song, decides to go all double-time, syncopated, super fancy (or "complicated" as Jens Hannemann might put it), at times seeming to forget about the singer and rest of the band. If this wasn't absurd enough Billie at one point urges the crowd to start clapping, which they do, but it peters down to a few heroic pairs of hands when Mr. Time Signatures starts exploring. I listened to these three tracks 50 times!

Daytime Volume "The Day We Transposed" (Expunged) This guy sings like a bug.

Daze "Slow Down to Speed Up" (Livid POB 276132 Boca Raton FL 33427) I've got the Daze Craze! This band is better than Nirvana and way less suicidal!

DDR (Listen Loudest) Obtusely awesome rock n roll.

The Dead Betties "Fuck You Avril, You're in the Army Now," "Malls of the Midwest" b/w "Destination I Do," "Nightmare Sequence" (Cordless 28 Locust Street Unit 105 Brooklyn NY 11206) This simultaneously strikes me as bizarrely terrible and as my new favorite band. I can go either way on angry art punk, but when a healthy and decadent sense of absurdity is injected Aand when the vocals are glam-infected I'm on board! And this coming from someone who always thought Dead Veronica was way hotter than Dead Betty.

Dead Heart Bloom "Chelsea Diaries" (Kei) Live Smart Boom!

Dead Hookers "The Burial/The Rebirth" (Dead Beat) These Ho's are somehow able to capture the vibe and danger of trash punk bordering on hardcore while obtaining mood and narrative by drawing on goth and even psyche when necessary. Dead on!

The Deadly Syndrome "The Ortolan" (Dim Mak) Pleasantly deadly.

Dear and Glorious Physician (New Grenada) Something about the tone of this music made me feel a little nauseous, but the fact that I risked vomiting to keep listening to these driving (though mid-tempo-ed) indie tunes must mean something.

The Death Riders "Soundtrack for Depression" (Horror High 3120 W. Carefree Hwy Ste. 1-339 Phoenix AZ 85086) This death music is what I call living! Clean and cool while being nasty and creepy, this is what you should be listening to in your car as you head towards your dangerous caper.

Decay of the Angel (Nice & Friendly) It's rare to hear musical composition so original that you can say it's genuinely strange. At times evoking Lena Lovich, the Mothers, the Boredoms, Sergio Leone, Julie Cruise, and a bonsai tree, this really doesn't sound like anyone else, and remarkably never gives cues as to where it's going next. Absolutely stellar cover art makes this an excellent package.

The December Drive "Arrivals/Departures" EP (myspace.com/thedecemberdrive) Intensely intense yet sensitively sensitive. Just like December. And just like driving.

Delorean "As Time Breaks Off" 12" (Simple Social Graces Discos 319 Lafayette St. #218 NYC 10012) Dancegloryan.

Demander "The Unkindness of Ravens" (demandermusic.com) Demediocre.

Demolition Doll Rods "Let Yourself Go" DVD (Munster) Who wouldn't appreciate one of the best live bands of our generation committed to multi-camera video shoot in a Euro-club in front of a stunned audience? Danny and Margaret Doll Rod continue to use their spectacular, near-naked bodies as dynamic symbols of everything gloriously decadent, trashy, dangerous, and beautiful in rock 'n' roll. Mind you, if they were just a couple of hot bods they might still be good artist's models, but it's the fact that they boil the blues, garage music, Midwestern boogie rock, and no-fi punk down to a bullion cube of musical might that makes them so vital. This concert is notable for the inclusion of their new drummer, who wisely doesn't attempt to capture the cavewoman beat of their classic drummer, and musically makes a great addition. Just as importantly, she wears her nakedness with a powerful defiance, striking challenging contraposto poses that evokes the Tura Santana school of asskicking beauties. The DVD is supplemented by a classic lineup performance, making this a serious must have.

Demon's Claw "Satan's Little Pet Pig" (In The Red) Clawed me to eargasms with herky jerky rock n roll urgency!

Descent "This Violent Reality" (Corellian Records) Decent!

Desert Hearts DVD (Wolfe) The packaging and deluxe double disc presentation of this DVD makes it clear that this is considered a classic in lesbian cinema, and that is, frankly a little confusing. This is a mediocre movie with awkward writing, a completely unconvincing period setting (1959 as envisioned by hairdressers trained in the eighties) and a total lack of chemistry between the romantic leads. At least that's the case when they're talking. However, about 70 minutes into the picture there is a lovemaking scene that's jarringly silent, devastatingly erotic, and unnervingly honest. I'm certain that these five minutes are the reason this film has endeared itself to the Sapphites, but you might do well to fast forward to it. One delight herein, though, is a great acting performance by Audra "Mrs. Roper" Lindley.

Destination: Oblivion "December Sun" (430 NE 79th Ave Portland OR 97213) Futuristic extreme music that will crush you!

Destination Vegas ELVIS DVD (Weinerworld) This is so bad I wish I could tape over a DVD. Though it promises to be built around rare photos and home movies of Elvis in Vegas, think about that...Elvis was supposedly the most photographed person in history, so these are millions of blurry amateur boring photos of him, and some are included here, as well as a few audience super 8 performance clips. If they told Elvis' Vegas story this way maybe this would be OK, but since they have to pad this out with public domain stuff from Elvis' 1956 TV appearances and movie trailers they are forced to tell Elvis' entire story in the least groundbreaking way ever. The only innovation that will surprise Elvis fans, who will be bored to tears by seeing footage they have seen a million times repeated, is that the narration is just a long, vitriolic essay on Elvis made bitchier by an English accent. Thus, even though only Elvis diehards would buy this, the narrator basically attacks them, calling anyone who likes 60s or 70s Elvis an apologist or rube, and left-handedly conceding that the "Elvis in Memphis" LP was not horrible, even though critics were full of shit for loving it. So basically this insults the only people who would watch this. The only good parts are audio tapes of lengthy Elvis stage semi-coherent rambles (which are presented as proof of his drug addiction, though that might not hold up in court), sometimes presented with the super eight fan footage to make it look like he's saying it on film.

Destroy All Monsters "Grow Live Monsters" DVD (MVD) Not just for Cleveland underground rock fans, this DVD poo poos the music legacy (despite a great soundtrack) and proudly presents the experimental films that were one of the foundations of this legendary multimedia collective. Combining elements of avant-garde, lowbrow b-movies, and teenage narrative super-eight home movies, these monster-ous, nautical, sexy, artfuck flicks will be the perfect background for your next barbecue, cult meeting, or mass suicide.

Destructors 666 "Many Were Killed, Few Were Chosen," **Destructors 666/Sup** "No Parasan" split EP, **Destructors 666/Ruined** split (RF) The Destructors were a late 70s/early 80s British punk/Oi-ish band best known historically for their guitarist being the guitarist on Prodigy's best dance punk records a generation later. Revived over the last few years the new version of the band releases a hundred or so CDs a year, many of them splits, and all demonstrating a sense of dramatic punk urgency that feels simple and retro but also powerfully fresh. Their split-mates don't fare as well. Sup is joylessly generic, and the Ruined are trying to hard. Your best bet is to dig up the full length, which features the best song off either split, "Flying Saucer Man," plus some nice monster movie punk.

Destructo Swarmbots "clear light" (Public Guilt POB 4756 Baltimore MD 21211) Shouldn't a band that has the words destructo, swarm, and bots in their name sound like Lightning Bolt on pep pills? This is outer space atmospheria where the sound shifts a little every 11 minutes.

Détente "Recognize No Authority" (Roadrunner) Blazing metal that will thrash you back to big shorts days and will sword butcher you back to the middle ages!

The Detroit Cobras "Tied and True" (Bloodshot) Mix torch and trash and what do you get? Well, usually burning garbage, but in the case of these Motor City slitherers you get some deep grooves that groove deep. This cover-heavy album is one of their best, and you know what...they smell better than a trash fire, too!

The Dimes "The Silent Generation" (Pet Marmoset 1926 West burnside #205 Portland OR 97209) Should be called "The 10, 000, 000 Dimes," because they sound like a million bucks!

Dishwasher zine #16 (dishwasherpete.com), **DISHWASHER** by Pete Jordan (Harper) Fans of the long m.i.a. zine *Dishwasher* should rejoice the publication of the (sorta) collected dishwashing tales into book form, and the emergence of the fabled 16th issue. As far as the book goes, it is better than the sum of its parts, and its parts were pretty good. Revisit the era of the so-called 90s "slacker" by traveling the country washing dishes with the hardest working lazy man (and most goal-oriented ambitionless person) ever. About travel, freedom, labor (and Labor), history, dignity, and elbow grease, this is a genuinely engaging fable. Note: The dishwashing story in the decade-plus in the making swansong issue is as good as anything in the book, and the dish history (and pro-labor/pro-minimum wage rantings) make it well worth the buck or two it'll run you. But buy the BOOK!

Andy Ditzler "Songs from Yes and No" (Frequent Small Meals) If you were waiting for the *Schoolhouse Rocks* songs about religious fundamentalism, the ills of media monopolies, the lies of America, reincarnation, and foreign pronunciation, here it is!

Danny Django "Touch the Sky" (Happy Hippie POB 63581 Colorado Springs CO 80962-3851) Django is a pop music angel sent from heaven to bless us with magical music. He should be more famous than the Spice Girls.

DJ Mayonnaise "Still Alive" (Anticon, anticon.com) I'd like to hold the Mayo...close to my heart! If you need something gloriously wrong on your sonic sandwich this audio experimenter is what you need to be spreadin'.

D.O.A. "Bloodied But Unbowed," "Punk Rock Singles 1978-99," **Joe Shithead Kiethley and his Band of Rebels** (Sudden Death Cascades PO Box 4300-1 Burnaby BC Canada V5G 3HO) No offense to the last quarter century, but if you want to understand the real history of punk you really only need the late 70s until 1983, which are years well-covered on these two stellar compilation CDs of the Canuck punk gods of awesomeness. I just don't know how to express how good this is, other than to say that if you have any inkling of wanting to become a practicing punk musician, these CDs can be your correspondence school. There are genuinely maybe a half dozen punk/hardcore bands whose work holds up as well as D.O.A.'s. Gloriously, Mr. D.O.A. himself, Joey Shithead, is still A.A.K. (alive and kicking) and his latest album is a nice primer on how to grow older without getting mellower and to stay angry without getting crotchety.

Dog Day "Night Group" (Tomlab) Bow wow wow yippy yo yippy YAYYYY!

Double Dagger (Stationary [Heart] Recordings POB 220723 Chicago, IL 60622) Though these jagged, bouncy musical stabbings certainly justify the band name, I just wish they were named Double Dagwoods because I think that's hilarious. Two Dagwoods! Think about the sandwiches they could eat! But they couldn't play drum and bass as scrambley or funky as these dudes, I bet.

Jason Dove "We Should Be Together" (3440 Chestnut Ave Baltimore MD 21211) Though I'm hesitant to call this (very confident, extremely well-crafted album) indie pop at its best, I can certainly say that indie pop at its best genuinely infects you with simple, poignant songs that you can't get out of your head. And this Dove certainly delivers a few olive branches fitting that description, most notably the ambiguously sexy "Slumber Party."

The Downbeat 5 "Live - Smoke and Mirrors" (Steel Cage pob 29247 Phila PA 19125) These downbeaters didn't beat me down, the hurled me up with some of the most exciting rock n roll grooves my tired ears have heard in awhile. I wish I was at that show!

Downliners Sect "Sect Maniax-The Showbiz Years 1979-1980" (Castle/Sanctuary Records, sanctuaryrecordsgroup.co.uk) I was talking, Transatlantic, to Don Craine, founding member of The Downliners Sect, Britain's longest-standing R&R/R&B institution, recently. He told me that The Sect, and their mates, The Troggs, get hired sometimes to do "Mod" events, but some patrons get their noses out of joint "Because you don't sound enough like your 60s records." Please! If either band sounded any more, today, like they did in the 60s, they'd have to stop, mid-set, to announce JFK's assassination or the invasion of Cambodia. The Sect took a break for about 8 years in the late 60s, but returned just in time to join The Troggs in reclaiming their piece of the Punk turf in '76-'77. They released the excellent "Showbiz"/"Killing Me" 45 on UK Punk label, Raw Records, which was met with the kind of enthusiasm and acclaim that, unfortunately, eluded the reformed Pink Fairies and Deviants. If the Raw single were on this complation, that would have made it absolutely perfect....still, having the elusive 1979 "Showbiz" LP on CD for the first time is something to shout about. This collection finds the group exploring many new and different terrains, and usually coming up all aces. Obvious standouts include the Pub Rock classics,"Playing My Guitar" and "Out of School" (both of which had been reworked for a great Punk Exploitation LP, recorded by members of The Sect as "F.U.2"), Frustration, still a staple in their live set, but, c'mon, lads, bring back..."Showbiz," the title track, a remake of the same song that kicked off their comeback a couple of years earlier. The original single version had a fantastic production (a reverb tsunami comparable to "Sonic Reducer"), while the LP version is more, well, you know, RAW. I like this version better with repeated listening, though, I found it kind of flat when I lucked into a copy of the LP for a dollar, several years ago. Besides, it's got one of the funniest lines from that era, " Leroy, the wild boy, boozin' in the corner, alone. You know he made his name in Softcore Porn. Just because they told him he could get it on. You know, these days, he can't even raise a smile." There's plenty of tuff Chuck Berryisms from guitarist Terry Clemson (later replaced by Del Dwyer), executed in a matter that recalls The MC5's "Back in The USA," which is referenced on BOTH CD's, and, with the added melodicisms of Don Craine and Keith Grant Evans (they'll deny it, probably, but the buggers can SING), the late 70s model Sect provides a happy medium between Dr. Feelgood and Rockpile, and that's "Good Rockin'" to me. The second CD features, along with some raucous live tracks from the 80s (if only to prove all hope was not lost), the extremely rare Inner Mystique Records 45 (released by our great friend, *Ugly Things* and *Black To Comm* scribe, Bill Shute), "You Ain't Doin' Me Right"/"Color Coded Red," two slabs of primo steak (the kind you can sink your teeth into) from 1980, garnished with two, unreleased, hot tracks from the same session.The live stuff gives you a pretty good idea what kind of damage Thee Original Deerstalking Men could do a quarter century ago (and can still do NOW). Largely composed of Chuck Berry and Bo Diddley warhorses, the same tunes they were covering when they hashed it out with The Stones down at Eel Pie Island. Come to think of it, The Stones were doing 'em, too. As hot as this stuff is, you haven't lived until you've heard the back-to-back barnburners, "Too Much Monkey Business" and "I'm a Lover, Not a Fighter " from the 2000 live album "Burning Snow." Songs you swore you didn't even want to have played at your funeral, like "Got My Mojo Workin'" and " Hoochie Coochie Man" take on new life of their own, while impossible-to-fuck-up good'uns like "Sweet Little Sixteen" and "Route 66" (which closes the set in savage style, much like The Pretty Things did on their recent live DVD/CD). Besides that, there's fiery sendups of Sect clasics, Bloodhound, Sect Appeal, and Loose Ends (from "Showbiz"), not to mention "Back in The U.S.A.," "Shake Your Money Maker" and Bo's lesser-known classic, "Nursery Rhymes" (Also recorded by the original group in 1963). You may have heard this stuff before, but when was the last time you've heard it done RIGHT? The Sect will welcome you as an old friend, even if it's your first go 'round.

Drain The Sky (Life is Abuse) Sprained My Mind!

Nick Drake Under Review DVD (Sexy Intellectual) This is perhaps the most artful and visually precious entry in this music documentary series However, the dearth of material – Drake died young leaving behind no journals or lost writings, no spouse with whom he shared ideas, no videos or filmed footage to speak – make this a pretty thin film. His legacy is his 3.5 albums, and they are certainly discussed and appreciated well here (good move to have musicians rather than rock critics get the key interview spots in this) but that alone is not exactly satisfying.

Scott "Deluxe" Drake "Grand Mal" (rankoutsider) Rootsy punk that sounds worn, grizzled, and ready for action. Scary good. Or maybe just scary.

Robert Drasnin "Voodoo II" (Dionysus POB 1975 Burbank CA 91507) The king of TV theme music, and an Exotica legend for 1960's "Voodoo" LP, Drasnin defies his septegenarianism by busting out a sequel that's exoticer and more Tikified than the original. If this doesn't transport you to the Islands and put bamboo in your soul than you need bamboo under your fingernails because there is something wrong with you.

Drats!!! "Welcome to New Granada – the rock operetta" (Whoothehellsijim entertainment) A band I never heard of making a rock opera about a 1970s Matt Dillon movie called *Over the Edge* that I also never heard of. Until now! If this song cycle is any indication it's my new favorite movie, and if these song cyclers are any indicators this is my new favorite band.

dream whip no. 14 by bill brown (Microcosm) More a work of engaging journalism than a personal zine (and more a book than a zine, for that matter), *dream whip* travels, ponders, adventures, and cooks fake chicken salad. But more importantly, it has the one thing no other alternative publication has - -an index! I love indexes (or indices to be more accurate, though spellcheck doesn't seem to mind the former), and to be able to find the exact page where a vibrating bed is located is a treat I wont soon forget.

The Drifters "Greatest Hits Live" DVD, "Greatest Hits" CD (MVD) I have seen the current Drifters live and was swept up in the showmanship, the magnificent material, and the audience joy. As a souvenir of such a concert I can imagine buying both this DVD and this CD of re-recorded classics. But to buy it other than after being swept up by the feel good show is a bit hard to imagine – these are obviously not the original or the second incarnation or the fifth incarnation of the legendary group, they are merely the excellent current lineup. That said, this is one of the best shot, richest looking oldies revue videos I've seen.

Driver of the Year "Will Destroy You" (Future Appletree) Drove me future-crazy!

Drowning Pool "Full Circle" (ADA) People still make music this bad?

DST "Gubit ak kontrole" (Listen Loudest) This scrambled my ear-eggs with Outsider Rock strangeness. Super dynamic, and extremely unique, so whatever "Gubit" means, I want to do it!

Dub Rebellion "Live and Wicked Dub" (Listen Loudest) Dub so wicked it could get a job teaching witch classes. This CD gave me a contact high.

The Dukes of Windsor "the others" (iriver) The Dukes of Asskicking Awesomeness!

Duplex Planet zine (POB 1230 Saratoga Springs, NY 12866) Old is cool.

Dutch Kills "Blissville" (Wordclock) If you can't stand annoying vocals, Don't go Dutch.

Bob Dylan "The Golden Years 1962-1978" (MVD) This is pretty pointless - -an unauthorized Dylan documentary is an ok idea, but a Dylan doc with no Dylan music is worthless. There is one great passage here, though: an arrogant music critic declaring that without a shadow of a doubt Dylan did not name himself after Dylan Thomas is juxtaposed against a humble Minnesotan recalling that Dylan told him – at their ten year high school reunion - that Dylan Thomas *was* the source of his name! And you gotta love the concept of Dylan going to his reunion.

The Earaches "Time On Fire" (Steel Cage POB 29247 Philadelphia PA 19125) So rock 'n' roll it's like being smacked in the head with a rawk rock. Should be called the Earpleasures.

Mitch Easter "dynamico" (Electric Devil) Sometimes powerpop is genuinely life affirming because it is so optimistically shameless with grown men singing in little teen voices and all the genuflection to the Beatles. What could be more shameless than trying to recreate the sound of the biggest band ever? But sometimes that winning formula flips and it's just depressing Why is he singing like that? The Beatles, are you kidding? This CD bummed me out, and I'm an Easter-head.

The Eat "It's Not the Eat, It's the Humidity" (Alternative Tentacles) Best known for recording one of the most coveted (and expensive) record collecting scum pre-hardcore American punk 7-inchers ever, this band raised their profile by recording a pretty great decades-late follow up during the Green Day punk era. This fantastic compilation contains the early recordings, later recordings, lotsa unreleased stuff, and a nice 2- CD of sloppy live shows from 80, 81, 82 and 96. Funny, stupid, and ridiculous, this is exactly what punk should be, and "Communist Radio" is one highly touted obscuro gem that does not disappoint. I wish the tracks were identified better somewhere (when were most of these recorded, 80s, 70s, last year?) but overall, another awesome entry in the Alternative Tentacles bands that never made it but shoulda series!

Eavil "Phantasmic Seam" (e@eavil.com) Should be called AWESOMEavil!

EB11 (eb11music@hotmail.com) Extra Bad to the 11- power.

"Eccentric Soul: Twinight's Lunar Rotation (Numero Group, numerogroup.com) Whatever you just listened to, this CD is better. While it will be hard to ever top the volume of this obscure R&B-unearthings series that uncovered the story behind the "Hot Grits" 45, this Chicago-centric volume contains tracks by superheros of soul like Renaldo Domino, the Notations, and the mighty Stormy (a/k/a "The Devestator"). I wish I could describe how amazing this record is but I can't so just obtain it NOW.

"ed" compilation CD (Disclexingron.com) Chicago's first punk band, the Cunts, have been mysterious, weird, invisible, sluggish, strange, ridiculous and lots of other things...but now add lazy! Instead of reemerging with another obscure, hard to find Disturbing label album (as they do a couple times a decade) they are just teasing us with 4 songs on a compilation. And of course their sloppy garage punk knocks all others out of the box here, but there's also some boss twang from New Town Drunks and some kind of weird dub pop song about John Hinkley.

Edie "Realities" (Stickfigure) I am entranced and powerless in the spell of this vocal enchantress! Realer than reality!

Ego Plum and the Ebola Music Orchestra "The Rat King" (Ebolamusic.com) "Art" and "Rat," as well as "King" and "Gink," are basically the same words. Think about it.

E. Grizzly "Hip Hop is Dead The Mix-Tape Vol. 1" (?) The only breakthrough on this CD is that E. raps his credits/shoutouts before the rest of the songs. But overall this is solid. With a killer producer the Grizzly could maul.

Einstuerzende Neubauten "Palast Der Republik" (MVD) This 2004 concert shows the warm, acoustic, humorous side of these Teutonic tunesters. Just kidding. It's triumphantly cold and creepy!

The Elastik Band (Digital Cellars POB 3953 Napa CA 94558) Yes, this is the genius act responsible for the demented *Nuggets*-classic "Spazz" (though technically it's a *Pebbles* track that only became a Nugget in the CD era). And while nothing else on this compilation CD compares to the rude, ominous riffage of that single, I'm pleased to announce that there are a number of tracks on this archival compilation of equal, though very different, weirdness. Apparently these were L.A. Psychedelic scenesters, which means that they had far more professional musical prowess than a Midwestern garage psyche-act, but also that they were inclined to get a little adult contemporary at times. However, this is a killer comp, and the final track, an airshot of a 60s Australian deejay playing "Spazz," then cutting it short and apologizing to the listeners for playing that decadent, evil noise, is worth the price of the CD.

Electric Frankenstein/Dollhouse split EP (442 eme Rue) EF continues to chug out more than adequate trash rock while DH sounds a little warmed over and out of breath.

The Electricutions "Sedition, Subversion, and Espionage" EP (Big Neck) Jaunty punk that is (if such a phrase is possible) pleasantly political, meaning that instead of blind messy rage these kids lean towards the protest music traditions of the pre-punk era.

Ellsworth "American Compost" (myspace.com/elsworthsongs) Rootsy rock 'n' roll that combines classic blues stylings and country traditions with timeless songwriting and sharp ideas (both thematically and musically). Not sure why an artist of this quality has to self-release CDs, but I guess that's where "the industry" is at these days.

The Emergency "Doo-Lang Doo-Lang" (theemergency.net) The twangyman outside your window.

Empty Orchestra "Here Lies..." (Thinker Thought 1002 Devonshire Rd Washington IL 61571) Stark and powerful Americana music from an America where everyone is more dramatic sounding than in any part of the country I've ever been. And I *LOVE* the drama!

Encomiast (Lens) The EconimiBEST!

Endless Highway – the music of the band (SLG 429Santa Monica Blvd suite 330 Santa Monica CA 90405) Ouch. Sure I dig the Band, but who needs to hear Jack Johnson, Jakob Dylan, Bruce Hornsby and Guster doing covers?

Stace England & the Salt Kings "Salt Sex Slaves" (Rankoutsider, rankoutsiderrecords.com) Alt-Country with genuine sounding Southern soul some serious rocking-when-they-wanna and slightly offsetting indie rock vocals.

Enter Shikari "Take to the Skies" (Ambush Reality) Exit stage left....

Envie (Stickfigure POB 55462 Atl GA 30308) NV stands for Not Very interesting.

Paul Epic "South of Heaven, North of Hell" (Beeshive Records) Epically ungood.

The Epsilons "Killed 'Em Deader'N A Six Card Poker Hand" (Retard Disco POB 461163 LA CA 90046) Epsilent! This is the rockingest garage punk rock rock rock rock album to infect me in longer than I can remember.

The Ergs! "Upstairs/downstairs" (Dirtnap) Profoundly unprofound teenage music that could only be sung this nasally! Erg-arific!

Eux Autres "Cold City" (hhbtm) Euxcellent!

The Evaporators "Gassy Jack and Other Tales" (Mint/Nardwuar) **Nardwuar** "Welcome to My Castle" DVD (Mint/Nardwuar) It's amazing how magical garage punk

becomes when you remove any façade of "cool" away from it. Nardwuar the Human Serviette, better known for his challenging interview style then for his longstanding bands and proud record label, delivers a genuinely awesome album here that transcends novelty by being intensely sincere about extremely local Candian culture, sasquatch, flexidiscs, and float planes. Add in a Subhumans tribute cover art (apparently Nard's ambitions have become more humble, and patriotic, since his previous Sammy Davis, Jr. tribute cover art) and a bucketful of amazing videos and you have a platter that matters. Also out is a double DVD that compiles two of Nardwuar's classic cable access shows, with what I'm sure is (or seems like) 24 hours of bonus material. I have not received this release at deadline, but because of Mr. Serviette's generosity, I was sent a VHS copy of these back "in the day," thus I can confidently say that this is absurdly amazing. From his early toque-wearing kamikaze interviews to his recent Captain Canuck superhero costume music videos this dude proves himself to be the best thing out of Vancouver, BC since the White Sox Triple A franchise split town fifteen years back. Also features Kurt and Courtney footage more revealing than anything Nick Broomfield could dream of.

Evenfall Volume II: Soul to Keep by Pete Stathis (petestathis.com) Unlike *Cathy*, this engaging fantasy comic features a dynamic, bold, three-dimensional female protagonist who is compelling and free of lazy, stereotypes. But too much like *Cathy*, this comic often uses way to many words – trust the pictures Pete!

The Exits "The Legendary Lost Exits Album" (Rev-Ola) You may know "The Fashion Plague" but this Brit power pop/new wave band shifted gears and disappeared before releasing the album's worth of recorded material. Surprisingly, most of it is as good as that single, some better, and only two or three tracks are cash in riffs on their hit single. This will definitely get some head shaking dancing and mod moves going at your next party, which is a better endorsement than evoking the historicity of this release.

Ex Lion Tamer "go ghost" (Tinstar Creative Pool, tinstarcreativepool.com) Shoegazer music that makes you notice that your shoes could very possibly kick some ass.

The Exploding Hearts "Shattered" (Dirtnap 2615 SE Clinton St. Portland OR 97202) Posthumous (literally, most of the band died in a van accident a few years back) rarities collection by as pure a power pop punk band that this decade has produced. Not as good as their real Dirtnap LP, but pretty damn good, plus this includes some great live concert videos.

Factor-11 "Shoot the Freak" (Sheer Energy 313 El Faisoan Drive San Rafael CA 94903) Despite a band name and cover art that guaranteed this would be unlistenable nu-metal, in fact this is a pleasant bar rockin' band that's easy to love. Turn it to 11!

Joe Fahey "Tote Bag" (Rough Fish POB 21568 Mpls MN 55421) If he was my college roommate I could pretend to really like his songs, but otherwise, kinda like his songs is about all I can muster.

Fake Problems "Spurs and Spokes/Bull>Matador," "How Far Our Bodies Go" (Sabot POB 28 Gainesville FL 32602) If you want to roots rock your woes away the Fake Problems are the Real Solution!

Teri Falini "the room" (National Recorder, myspace.com/terifalini) Teri FaGENIUSli!

The Fall "Reformation" (Narnack) This amazing CD is basically just an hour of trouble. The Fall guy has spent the last hundred years or so years making musical mischief and this latest is as gloriously twisted as anything he's unleashed so far. Dire musical warnings, trucking songs, minimalist mayhem, and hidden rock n roll simmer and bubble together for the tastiest poison stew you'll pour in your earholes this year!

Fastcomputers "heart geometry" (fastcomputers.com) Something in the water DOES compute!

Fauxhawk "Enough is Enough" (adita.org/fauxhawk) Fauxin' A!

Ryan Ferguson "Only Trying to Help" (Better Looking 11041 Santa Monica Blvd #302 LA, CA 90025) Fergonomically sound.

Mike Ferraro "Awful Killers" (mikeferraro.net) Pass the Mike.

Filthy Thieving Bastards "...I'm A Son of a Gun" (BYO POB 67609 LA CA 90067) Filthy Asskicking Asskickers!

Final Solutions "Songs by Solutions" (Goner) I'm not even sure what this is, as it ain't exactly anything, but it sure is something! Simultaneously artless and art rock, and trashy and exquisite, this solution is undilutable!

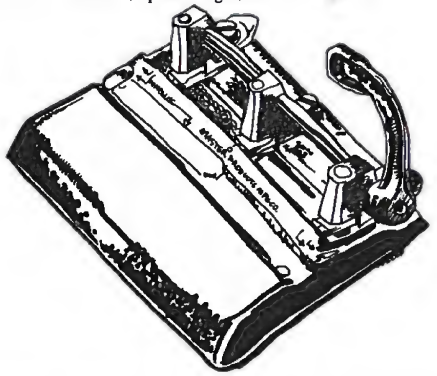
Fiery Furnaces "Widow City" (Thrill Jockey) Classic rock riffs and frustrated graduate student in literature lyrics combine to stoke the fire down below.

Firefox Ax "Madame, Madame!" (Minty Fresh) Both fiery and foxy, this CD once again proves that somehow or another the Minty Fresh formula (getting bands who write good songs and have a singer with a stunning voice) still works. Pretty soon some other labels might figure this one out, but somehow I doubt it.

Fishbone "Still Stuck in your Throat" (soundincolor.com) I will always think the 'Bone is the best, even at their worst, so maybe you can't trust me on this one, BUT I LOVE IT! Angelo has become crazier and angrier and more intense, and what was once a manic kid having fun has become a madman making serious trouble. This is genuine *rock* music, and if you don't want this bone stuck in your throat, or worse places, get on boat or get out of the way.

Fishboy "how we failed to save the lone star state with the power of rock and roll" (HHBTM) I will grant that if you have to sing in a nasal whine that if you take it all the way to the point where you sound like a cartoon mouse you get some leeway. The fact that the music backing this animated critter actually can legitimately be called both rock and roll helps.

A Fistful of Rock N Roll Volume 13 Parts 2 & 3 (Steel Cage) One thing that Electric Frankenstein can never be accused of is moderation. I expect their discography includes over 200 singles, EPs and albums, so it's not surprising that this trash punk compilation series curated by EF's guitarist is way over the top. Averaging about two huge comps a year, these Fists have just become more than full with the new 3 disc set (part 1 was a bonus disc in Steel Cage's excellent *Carbon 14* magazine, this is a deluxe double disc release) that features over 70 bands total, and hours of hard rocking music. Some of my faves show up here, including Kitty and the Kowalskis, Thee Michele Gun Elephant and Sewergrooves, plus some all stars like The Makers and Danko Jones show up. But this CD is about getting to meet the groups you never heard of, and my new faves are Pisser, Spread Eagle, and the Genders.



Flaming Lips "UFO's at the Zoo" DVD (Warner Brothers) At the risk of being the Grinch, I will reveal what happens at the beginning of a giant Flaming Lips festival concert. Before Wayne goes about the not-exciting steps of methodically getting in a giant inflatable hamster ball and having a crew of assistants slowly, and carefully, help him get into the audience to gloriously roll over the crowd, he makes the concertgoers swear they won't reveal the mundane nature of the hamster ball's launch, and will only tell their friends of the magical rolling crowd surf. I dickishly reveal this only to relate that my experience at the Lips' big shows has at times been as underwhelming as watching a man work his way into a ball. While no one loves theatricality as much as me, somehow when the Lips' stage is crammed to the gills with inflatable monoliths, dancing Santa and Alien armies, puppets, confetti, superheroes, smoke, lights, and (occasionally) Beatle Bob I'm not quite convinced. Somehow it seems that the quality of the music is not enhanced by, nor in need of, the excess. However, that was only my in-person experience. Seeing this very important concert film changes my opinion, as all the too-muchness makes perfect sense on video. This is a moving, powerful, intense, perfectly proportioned extravaganza, with EVERY song being the climaxing finale of any other band's show. Even the Lips' obsessive fans come off well here, seeming like Deadheads with musical taste. And best yet, they have an actual Mothership land on stage. Worst off, because the Lips' label Warner Brothers is the parent company of DC comics, they can't clear the (rival Marvel Comics') Captain American costume worn by the main character in the stage show, so most of the extracurricular activity is conducted by a pixilated blur. Wait, maybe that's a good thing.

Flash Hawk Parlor Ensemble "Plastic Bag in the Tree" (Hush POB 12713 Portland OR 97212) Following my mother's advice about ability to say nice things, I will simply say that this band is incredibly gifted in naming bands and albums and leave it at that.

The Flatliners "The great Awake" (Fat Wreck Chords POB 193690 San Francisco CA 94119) Clash-tastic!

follow my voice with the music of Hedwig DVD (Wolfe) It was a great decision to craft this documentary about the making of an all-star *Hedwig* tribute CD so that it focuses on a handful of students at a New York school for troubled gay kids that is the beneficiary for this benefit album. Consequently, this becomes a real film and not just an extended infomercial. Mind you, the infomercial part is great, as the Breeders have amazing sisterly banter while recording, Frank Black is shown being profoundly impressive as an interpreter, and we get to see Yoko Ono in action at the recording studio (the highlight of the film). But it's the kids who make this work, as each of them seems to be both a perfect stereotype (a beautiful, tragic, wispy pre-op boy, a Latino gay teen struggling with his tradition of machismo, a quick-witted butch African American gender-studies-centric lesbian) but also are given the space to be seen as true individuals. While it sorta seems like they cherrypicked the most cinematic students (an Asian lesbian teen who is discovered at a Pride march and becomes a high fashion model does not seem too typical), as the film ends with a hateful demonstration outside of the school in the wake of the institution becoming an accredited branch of the public school system, it becomes clear how real and genuine the problems of these kids are, no matter how conveniently cinematic the characters are presented to us. One interesting note: though seemingly all stereotypes are exhausted, one seems to be falling by the wayside: though you'd expect Broadway show tune kids to be in abundance, no one at the school has ever heard of *Hedwig*. (One other semi-interesting footnote: when Yoko played Pitchfork this year she used the Hedwig composer, whom she meets in this film, in her band.)

Forbidden Tigers "Magnetic Problems" (Dead Beat) This is such a purely awesome rock n roll record that am far too pummeled and pleasure dto be particularly specific.

Fragile Dragon "Light Bend and Rhythm" (Atmospherex) Electronica that is too songish to be ambient and too atmospheric to dance to (at least not on the drugs I take). But listen to this on some headphones and you will be in a happy haze.

Robert Francis "One By One" (Aeronaut) This dude sings like a soulful ghost.

The Freak-Outs (thefreakouts.com) It seems like you would have to be an idiot to live in the Pacific Northwest, make rock n roll music, and not sound like the Sonics and/or Wailers, but somehow every band except for this one has made that same stupid mistake. This is basically the best kind of music played in the perfectly wrong way.

The Fucking Champs "VI" (Drag City)This sounds like the soundtrack to the Knight Rider movie that they hopefully will get around to making soon.

Full Throttle Blue Demon Energy Drink - I was on the bus the other night, entering a largely Mexican neighborhood (which I love), when, what should I see, but TWO billboards graced with the likeness of Lucha Libre (Mexican Wrestling) superstar, Blue Demon. Though the billboards are in walking distance of The Congress Theatre, where sporadic Lucha Libre matches are held, though virtually not promoted at all, except, recently, in the Mexocentric daily, *Hoy* magazine, I still had to do a double take. Blue Demon, as we know him today, is actually the son of the original Blue Demon, who's now deceased. In later years, Blue Demon trained his son, (and other Luchadoros, or Mexican Wrestlers), and took great pride that he eventually entered the ring as Blue Demon, Jr., wearing the same mask, as a Rudo (Bad Guy). Blue Demon Jr. and arch-rival, Hijo Del Santo (or "Son of Santo"), much like their Fathers, are actually friends outside the ring, though the longstanding grudge, begun by Santo and Blue Demon, continues to this day, via their sons (the first Lucha Libre show I ever saw culminated in a grudge match between Son of Santo and Blue Demon, Jr. Son of Santo SHOULD have lost, but popular favor, and the judges, decreed otherwise). Getting back to the story at hand, upon closer inspection, I find this muy frio (very cool) billboard to be an advert for a new energy drink, designed by the Coca-Cola company for the Mexican market (Coca-Cola and Diet Coke are still available in Mexico, in glass bottles, BTW). I've never gone in for energy drinks that much. Red Bull tastes like nasty, melted bubble gum to me, and never really gave me "Wings." Monster wasn't quite as disgusting in the few times that I've had it, and it usually did the trick, AFTER a cup of coffee. In truth, I didn't even care how good this was, in terms of taste or "Lift." The Bad, Bad, Blue Demon, Jr. (who's actually a very nice man. I met him once) has an energy drink in his own name, and I felt it was my duty to hit the nearby Mexican markets and try to find it...I found it at the fourth store I looked up. It looks like any other can of Full Throttle, an otherwise common energy drink. It comes in a blue can that bears Blue Demon's name, but, alas, not his likeness. I found it to be surprisingly good-tasting, lightly carbonated and flavored with blue agave (agave is a tropical plant, not a fruit). I actually found myself swishing it around in my mouth, to get all the taste I could from it. It goes down pretty light, with no yecchy aftertaste. It has a "kick" comparable to the little ginseng packets you can find in truck stops, the caffeine/ginseng base of the drink does it's thing with no jitters. It's a nice, mild "lift" that's enhancing my performance, right now, as I write what other people could accomplish in three to five sentences.

Fulton Lights (Android Eats Records) A full ton of boring.

Functional Blackouts "The Severed Tongue Speaks For Everyone," The Very Best of the Monkees" (Dead Beat) These two releases are a CD version of a release I've only seen as a Criminal I.Q. vinyl LP and a singles and rarities collection. Hearing these as a (supposedly) post-mortem/autopsy is a pretty convincing argument for this band's potency. Transcending trash rock/garage they prove themselves to be art rock. But not art rock in the pretentious conceptual noise for noise's sake way, but rather, these Chicago rawkers were sculptors making solid, monumental, roughly hewn sound sculptures. You not only hear the volume, but when you subject yourself to these gloriously musical messes you physically feel the other definition of volume (the size of a 3-D space enclosed within or occupied by an object).

Functional Blackouts/KK Rampage split 7" (Big Neck) Apparently there's no such thing as too much rock n roll because somehow this killer slab of vinyl didn't make my head explode.

Fun From None – Live at the No Fun Festival DVD (Load) In all honesty I had this for months before I watched it, afraid of what I'd see. Too often noise concerts, particularly noise festivals, devolve into endurance rituals and I imagined watching this 2 disc set documenting the 2004 and 2005 No Fun Fest would take this to a new extreme. I was SO WRONG. The profound artistry (or artschoolistry if I want to be dickish) of this film by Chris Habib involves dynamic closeups, saturated video, innovative effects to emphasize the vibe of the music, still photography, edits matching the music, and incredible connections with the artists. What is best here is that the video completely argues for the vision of the musicians and the quality of the compositions. You may think you don't dig damaged electronics or experimental noise, but after watching Wolf Eyes, Kim Gordon, Magic Markers, Hair Police, Prurient, and other legends of cacophony in this presentation you may change your non-tune.

Fur Cups For Teeth "Fun Luck You Keep" (myspace.com/furcups) This is theoretically a double album (though a group this savvy and on the ball knows the value of a two minute song, thus both discs total less minutes than an Acid Mothers Temple segue between songs), with one slab being a techno/retro new wave offering and the other being punkier and rockier (the photo is Ramonesy). However, any 70s, 80s, or 00s reference is a little misleading because what I hear in almost every track is the awesome 90s experience of being at some oddball all-ages show where Kathleen Hanna is telling people where to stand, and they're happy to comply. If that sounds like an insult, I apologize, because I mean to say that these are awesome infectious songs boiled down to just the right potent concentration. And they're super fun. And furry-toothed, apparently.

Ezra Furman & the Harpoons "Banging Down the Doors" (Minty Fresh) Ironically this man sounds too young to have fur anywhere, but the twisted maturity of his boldness and strange lyrical decision-making betrays his "youth."

Hannah Fury "Through the Gash" (Mellow Traumatic Recordings) Furiously dull.

FUZZ – The Sound That Revolutionized the World DVD (Brinkfilm) More about sound than music, this documentary tells the history (briefly), musical uses of (half-heartedly) and compulsive collector fascination with (obsessively) fuzzbox guitar foot pedals. Every guitarist who ever stomped on a box will probably love the gabbing about rare transistors, distortion jargon, and massive noise damage. But anyone who watches this will be entertained by the pride, fanaticism, and joy these techs and rockers get from their peddling. And I dare you not to feel creepy revulsion/fascination as the fuzzbox king walks you through his factory fondling the international workforce of young immigrant girls assembling the circuit boards you stick your ¼" jack into.

Galactic Zoo Dossier #7 by Plastic Crimewave (Drag City) The reason Plastic Crimewave's swims in the seas of psychedelic music history are more engaging than that other psyche magazine is that PW *LOVES* the men and women behind the music and really wants to figure out something about them and their lives. While the text could and should delve deeper, the fact that his artwork has become so much richer and more soulful means that his portraits really tell volumes about his subjects. And the CDs are awesome.

Gang Wizard "Byzantine Headache" (Load, myspace.com/loadrecords) Either brilliantly dumb or dumbly brilliant this is ten pounds of steaming, stumbling, yearning, burning, beautiful, ugly sound in a five pound ear-bag. Accept this challenge.

Gecko Club "Evergreen" (Northlight) Both the U2 and the Depeche Mode of reptile bands!

The Geeks "Too Fat Pig" b/w "Visiting At San Quentin" (SS 1114-21 St. Sacramento CA 95814, s-srecords.com) I cannot accurately describe the brilliance and weirdness of this ancient jazz punk artifact, but you NEED to get a copy.

The Gee Strings "a bunch of bugs" (Dead Beat POBox 361392 Cleveland OH 44136) The F Strings...as in Fuckin' AWESOME!

The Gena Rowlands Band "Flesh and Spirits" (Lujo) Maybe this is good, I can't tell. Who listens to some guy standing around singing songs like this?

The Ghetto Blasters "Torque," "Radio Universe" (Homestead, ghettoblasters.com) Rock for drinkin' that makes you want to drink to rockin'!

Ghost "Overture: Live In Nippon Yusen Soho 2006" (Drag City) This was built up pretty big, and I was very excited for it, but I have to tell you, this CD/DVD kind of bummed me out. Ghost have been doing the psyche/folk/ethereal/mystical rock from before it got underground hip, and to me they have always been otherworldly mystics playing their mighty instruments outside atop some snow capped Japanese mountain as wind blows their flowing hair and robes. Thus, seeing them performing amidst what in-person must have been a spectacular high tech visual sea of colors and digital designs, but on video is just a hippie light show, was kind of disappointing to me. It really grounded them when I wanted them to be lifted. And the darkness the light show required meant that they were really hard to videotape for the shots of the performers. I wish I listened to the CD first. It's still pretty awesome sounding, but my Ghost bubble had already been burst.

The Giant Robots "Record Riot" (Voodoo Rhythm) These Eurobots produce an album of some of the finest 60s style garage music to cross my border in ages. Amazingly they sound like they never heard a record made after 1966, they seem to want to make everyone dance (with beats ranging from French 60s rock to Pacific Northwest party rock) and they somehow make everything seem wholesome and righteous. These Giant Robots could crush my giant monsters any day!

The Ginger Envelope "edible orchids" (One Percent Press) A beautiful middleground between strummy indie rock and sweet Americana, the envelope can't be licked!

"Glamarama" compilation CD (442eme Rue, 64 BD Georges Clemeceau 89100 Sens France) This compilation of Glam rock/NYC punk covers/tributes/revivals features an international; cast of rockers that range from great never-heard-ofs (Pulpit Reds), lovable contemporaries (The Kowalskis, the Gee Strings), vets (Electric Frankenstien), and legends, living (Syl Sylain) and otherwise (Nikki Sudden). All in all it's a gloriously confusing, hard rocking mess!

Gabby Glaser "Gimme Splash" (Latch Key, latchkeyrecordings.com) If you sing breathy over wah-wah rock that's as bluesy as it is 70s porno- soundtracky than you have no one but yourself to blame for me falling in love with you. Get the restraining order ready, this goddess is mine!

Gliss "Love the Virgina" (Cordless) Glissens with rock that is both majestic and nuanced (a rare formula) and features some of the most gloriously debauched vocal tones you will hear this side of a rock orgy of the gods.

Glös "Harmonium" (lovitt) First off I want to express my sincere hope that there is a Gliss/Glös feud, just because saying those band names together makes my mouth happy. Second off, this is some seriously important-seeming music. Features strange singing, stern strumming, and stellar soundmaking. Better than Rick James' "Glø."

Golden Boys "Whiskey Flower" (Emperor Jones) Olden Joys!

The Goldilocks Zone "not too hot, not too cold, just right" (Journey Agent) Would give a Big Bad Wolf a sour stomach.

The Goodnight Loving "Crooked Lake" (Dusty Medical POB 1981 Milwaukee WI 53201) If the essence of good time beer drinking punk party rock was a snack cake, these cheeseheads would be the ones providing the creme filling!

Goribor "Standom do Tokija," "Live" (Listen Loudest) Should be called GoriEXCITE!

Gore Gore Girls "Get the Gore" (Bloodshot 3039 W. Irving Park Rd Chill 60618) Traditionally predominantly female bands have the knocks against them that either they are a Svengali's sexy puppets or that some crafty, creative man (or woman) has composed his/her own band chromosome-ally as a gimmick. The reason these Midwestern hellcats never come across as some fake construct, despite the fact that they fill a stage with attractive women in sexy duds, is that looking into their eyes you don't see vacant stares or happy *America's Top Model* smiling peepers – you see genuine toughness, grit, and rock n roll world-weariness. The 3G's have long conveyed this badassness on stage, but with this CD they get it captured on disc, so if you are ready to actually be knocked around by some tough broads who understand what rock n roll is about, get this gore.

Gothic Vampires from Hell DVD (Eclectic) Is there really such a thing as a Goth Battle of the Bands? Can blood really squirt that far? And hasn't computerized dancing baby/skeleton technology advanced since *Ally McBeal*? All these questions and less will be answered if you view this Z-movie.

Grabba Grabba Tape "Kurt Kobaya Y G.R.O.X." (Simple Social Graces Discos319 Lafayette St. #218 NYC 10012) Possibly the best album ever made. If I had a Speak and Spell as a child that sounded like this sonic mess I would either be president or Jeffrey Dahmer by now.

Graboids "infinite delay" (Stickfigure) Grabbed me by my oids...v-e-r-y s-l-o-w-l-y (but with pressure building continuously til it hurt so good).

Graffiti TV "The Best of Vol 1, 2 & 3", "Volume 4" DVDs (GTV/MVD) Graffiti videos, as demonstrated on the compilation DVD of this infamous series, are more like an episode of *Cops* (or more accurately, those TV shows based on narrated police car mounted camera footage) than an action-packed skate or surf video. Or more accurately, they are the opposite version of *Cops*, as camera crews follow around outlaws tagging, painting huge pieces, and shoplifting spraypaint. What's most notable about the classic episodes is the horrendous video quality and the dated Video Toaster special effects. These rough edges seem to add a whole 'nother level of danger and menace to the anti-establishment antics. On the newly released volume 4 the gang has finally rassled up digital cameras and the graininess is gone, which made me a little sad, but the mischief is in full effect, as they provide a video primer on how to sneak into train yards.

The Grannies "Gumjob" (Wondertaker.com POB 470153 SF, CA 94147) Should be called the Groanies, because that's what punk rock this bad makes me do.

"Grass Is Always Greener (On The Other Side)" sampler CD (Get Hip) A sampler of a label with great bands like the Uglybeats, Paybacks, Mondo Topless, Freddy and the Four-Gone Conclusions, and Chargers Street Gang is a guaranteed knockout.

Graves "Seldom Slumber" (Hush) The least spooky band ever with a cemetery-related name. Mellowly discombobulating lullabys.

Kiyoshi Graves "Chase" (jD8 kiyoshigraves.com) What a beautiful man! And through his music I have learned that he is beautiful inside as well.

The Gravetones "Dig It!" (Criminal I.Q. 3501 N Southport Ave Chicago IL 60657) Better than the current Misfits.

Kathy Greenholdt and then Edsel Boys "Wake Up Prayer" (KathyGreenholdt.com) While Greenholdt's voice and past work invokes classic, rural-ized, roots music, this CD triumphantly veers towards skinny tie-era new wave punk. Best of all, this excursion is completely irony-free and this is a great, rocking EP of sincere, powerful, rocking music.

The Green Mist "Next Stop Antarctica" (Bang) What makes Australian bands so inclined to spooky, gloomy, ominous voodoo? Is it the kangaroos? The boomerangs? Kangaroos with boomerangs?

Green Zone "indoor collection" (Slusaj Najglasnije!) What's behind the Green Zone? Great Tone (that's bad to the bone)!

The Gregg Yeti "the star-off machine" (Koala Syndicate POBox 35070 Syracuse NY 13215) Broke my CD player. Literally. I hate this CD, and I actually didn't hear it.

Gringo Star (myspace.com/thegringostars) Completely nostalgia-free 60s pop that is both majestically regal and satisfyingly sleazy.

Group Work by Temporary Services pob 121012 Chicago IL 60612) An artists group explores groups, group dynamics, and the nature of and conflict inherent in collaboration. Pedro Bell on P-Funk, The Ex on their fascinating career, and some really dynamic discussions of activist art highlight this fascinating collection

Gruuthaagy "Ranjena Zbijer" (Listen Loudest) Best band name in Croatia's history!

Guff "Symphony of Voices" (GO Kart POB 20 Prince St. Station NYC 10012) Pronounced "Goof."

Guitar Army by John Sinclair (Process) I'm going to take the high road and let my respect for Sinclair force me to hold my tongue. If you can't say something nice about a dated, somewhat unimpressive, would-be manifesto than don't say anything at all.

Guitar Fucker "Maximum Napalm Blues" (Little/Voodoo Rhythm) One of our favorite bluesy one man bands goes to the swamp, the hip hop club, the juke joint and the blue light in the basement party. If you are ready to get guitar fucked this is the fucker to fuck you!

Guns N' Roses DVD Collectors Box, Guns N' Roses: 2 Classic Albums Under Review Use Your Illusiuon I & II (Chrome Dreams) The box set contains two cheapio DVD biographies without any actual footage, logos, music, or interviews with G n R. And what kind of experts can the filmmakers be if they thought this release would cash in by coinciding with the release of "Chinese Democracy?" That said, it's fun to hear the early days of Axl stories from his first guitarist, would be manager, and minor hanger-on-ers. Much more impressive is the breakdown of the "Use Your Illusion" LPs. There's some wasted space here, as all of their associates (and the documentary makers) seem really invested in establishing their credentials, whether it furthers the film or not (OK, Slash came over to your house, you had the demo...we don't care!). The droves of material shoveled into these two double albums actually benefits from lots of critics blathering, and all the talk of excess, madness, riots, and ego-explosions actually fits in perfectly with the content and structure of the records. Also, note that this introduces hipster critics to the Under Review world, as a (somewhat nervous) Eric Weisbard who wrote the 331/3 book about the record is included.

Guttural Secrete (Unmatchedbrutality.com) Best songs about coprophilic asphyxias, larva masturbation, and fecal stuffed fuck stumps I've ever heard. Or at least in the top three. But seriously folks, this redefines "brutal."

The Gymnast DVD (Wolfe) Yet another May/September lesbian love story set among the exotic world of Vegas-bound erotic aerial trapeze gymnastics. I refuse to critique the acting of two women capable of unfurling, at top speed, from ribbons thirty feet above ground, and then stopping abruptly mid-air, and climaxing in sensual embraces. If Pauly Shore could do that he'd get Deniro's reviews. I also have more sympathy than I'm supposed to for the dude in the movie who loses his wife to beautiful, rich, lithe, twenty-year old, Asian superhero – even if he wasn't a dick how could he compete?

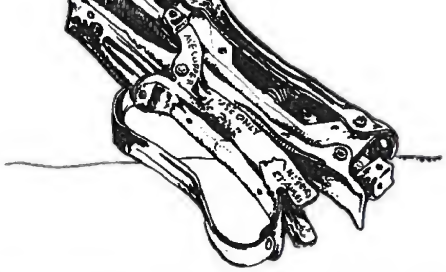
Gypsy Eyes sampler (POB 5546 WDC 20016) Best band: Shortstack. Best song" "Marianne You've Done It Now" by Vandaveer.

Kurt Hagardorn "Ten Singles" (Bladen County Records) Poppy folkers for peppy fuckers who like some funny/clever mixed in with their sincere

Nina Hagen "Fearless (Koch) I was initially kind of shocked at how incredibly great this still sounds a quarter century or so after its release. Then I kicked myself for waiting for this reissue to listen to this again. Hagen, working with Georgio Morodor, crafted perhaps the greatest Teutonic New Wave Disco Witch musical manifesto in history, and the idea of an early-80s NYC where (in theory, at least) Nina and Klaus Nomi could split a schnitzel is pretty fantastic, as this holds up in awesome absurdity to Nomi's best work.

Hail the Size "side two" (myspace.com/hailthesize) Yee haw! Somewhere between the Opry, Gilley's, and the Dr. Demento school of sensibility comes these drugstore cowboys.

Half-Cocked DVD (www.rumur.com) This movie's plot may sound like an absurd farce – dirty, non-musician slackers steal a band's instrument-filled van and embark on an ersatz tour where they become well-received experimental indie noise rockers. However, despite the seemingly over the top narrative, the reason this has become a minor classic is that it captures the details and the feel of touring and interacting with bandmates and meeting scenesters on the road in a profoundly accurate way that resonates with anyone who has been in the vicinity of this lifestyle. That said, it relates the misery much more than the glory in a way that makes *Half-Cocked* far from the easiest film to embrace – so many of the characters are lost, or damaged or aimless that it's hard to connect with anyone. That said, this should be required viewing for anyone thinking about dropping everything to go on tour.



Megan Hamilton "Feudal Ladies Club" (FM, meganhamiltonmusic.com) Like pirouetting in a dream!

Hammerlock "Forgotten Range" (Steel Cage, steelcagereocrds.com) These Scum-meisters and trashmasters have dug up their best songwriting yet on their latest platter. Even when a song by the mghty DAC pops up in the middle it doesn't stick out, 'cause they were really hammerlocked in on the songcraftin' this swing.

Haml "The Captain's Table" (Orange Twin) Something's not kosher here! Strange sounding horns/string section/waltz/beach/take drugs music that's more chamber pot music than chamber music. Hamtastic!

Hank IV "Third Person Shooter" (Hook or Crook 4219 Tanglewood Trail Spring Branch, TX 78070) I'm not sure what kind of party this CD is, but I want to go to it. This is a glorious crash between hillbilly culture and giant rock and roll robot apocalypse premonitions.

Happy Happy Birthday To Me Singles Club: Bunnygrunt/Phil Wilson split 7", **Fishboy/Babycalendar** split 7", **Casper and the Cookies/The Marbles** split 7", **Boyracer/Faintest Idea** split 7" (HHBTM POB 742 Athens GA 30603) Forget the Sub Pop or Estrus Crust singles clubs, this is straight up Simple Machines holiday series 7" club city, baby. The Bunnygrunt single is so wicked indie circa 1991 I couldn't believe it. And Babycallender was as joyful as joyful can be. And the Marbles' Dracula song is better than "Monster Mash!" Colored vinyl, too!

Happy Hate Me Nots "The Good That's Been Done...(an anthology)" (Feel) Dozens of slabs of 80s Aussie indie pop that's not as interesting as Aussie indie pop is supposed to be.

Haram "Drescher" (Lovitt) If you were in a movie and this music was in the background, brace yourself, because trouble's a-coming!

Gus Harless "Through Windows" (shaker sound 10933 Park Road Harrison AR 72601) If Jandek could play like Clapton this is what his music would sound like.

Les Hatepinks "Tete Malade Sick in the Head" (TKO 8941 Atlanta Ave #505 Huntington Beach CA 92646) Their hate-iest and pinkest yet! I've been waiting my whole life to hear snotty poppy punkers Franco-phonically pogo while singing about pizza and counting to three in French!

Haunted George "Bone Hauler" (Dead Beat) "Pile O' Meat" (Hook or Crook 360 Grand Ave #148 oakland CA 94610) An actual dead zombie ghost one man band from beyond the grave! This haint ain't quaint, he's horrifically hellacious! If this don't scare your bejeesus then get your bejeesus checked!

Hayseed Dixie "Weapons of Grass Destruction" (Cooking Vinyl POB 246 Huntington NY 11746) Not. Good.

Head of Femur "leader and the falcon" (headoffemur.com, Extant 2648 N. Whipple St. Chicago, IL 60647) Head of AWESOME!

Heavy Trash "Going Way Out with Heavy Trash" (Yep Roc) Heavy, trashy, and insane (he wants to suck his brain out his eyeball, and you will too!) Both kinds of music here – rock *and* roll.

Helen Money (Cellobird POB 477621 Chicago, IL 60647) If it's cello it's not mellow! And this incredible release made me say HELLO!

Hell on Heels "Dogs, Records & Wine" (Dionysus) There can never be too many trash rocking, 60s-themed, juvenile delinquent bad girl combos, and if half of them made music this good then this is all I'd listen to. The organ on "Pretty Mess," the classic drumming on "Sassy," and the vocal snarl on every track make this the kind of record you want to play in your car and drive fast!

Help Heal Heidi – Live in NYC March 13 2005 DVD (poptownrecords.com) New York's Bowery trash rock scene gets together to raise funds for one of their own, and for some reason Bobby Steele looks happy, healthy and sings the oldies like a lounge superstar. If *he* can pull it together Heidi's got a good shot! (Note: For some reason there's a rock n roll mummy cartoon in the middle)

Herbert "100 Pounds" (K7, k7.com) Robots that like Kenny G.

The Hex Dispensers (Alien Snatch, aliensnatch.com) Gave me hexual healing. Rocks like a landslide!

Hicke comix (Alternative) Usually anthology theme issues suck (the famously lame vampire cowboy issue of *Rip Off* was an actual ripoff) but this is the best one I've ever read. The theme is manly sports. Or maybe games. Or childhood, I guess. Or games, sports and childhood. No wonder this is such a good theme issue...no real theme!

Hickoids "Corn Demon" (Saustex, www.saustexmedia.com PO Box 691356, San Antonio, Texas, 78269-1356) I never cared too much for The Hickoids. I did like the idea behind the band, fusing Country and Punk. When I actually saw them, in the mid-80s, I remember scratching my head, thinking, "Where's the Country? Where's the Punk, for that matter?" It sounded more like a VERY drunken grudge match between ZZ Top and AC/DC. I saw them at least twice, so, it's not as though I missed something. This CD is a reissue of their original LP. I found a lot of it to be pretty grating, but, with moments of Alice Cooper/Flesheaterisms that border on Psychedelic confusion (comparable, perhaps, to Alice's first LP, and if that isn't praise, they put mules out to stud). I'm still not hearing a whole lot of Country influence, except on songs like the Honky Tonk in Hell "Driftwood 40-23" which opens with the now-dated statement, "I bought a RUBBER at the truckstop." I think AIDS was still a rumor the last time I heard 'em called THAT! Of course, there's familiar Country or Western riffs in and amongst the chaos, with "Ghost Riders in The Sky" and "The William Tell Overture" present and accounted for. A redneck brawl version of "Kung Fu Fighting" could have been hilarious if Iggy Yoakum had got the idea, first. As it stands, this version has a lot of lost potential. The liner notes elude to Jon Wayne and Elvis Hitler as "Lowbrow novelties" (not saying that's a bad thing), but, I think either one would have given such a parody more thought in regards to execution. A few excursions into hardcore (which was already dated by the time I saw these guys) aside, this album is not without merit. In this generation of Punk-Garage bands that sound like they're all playing in different rooms, The Hickoids could be a hit, and, as it happens, they're BAAAAAAAACK. (and to be fair, my Brother, who disliked 'em more than I did, spoke very highly of one of their recent shows).

Missy Higgins "On A Clear Light" (Reprise) Missy and her music are so lovely they gave me a higg on!

High Llamas "Can Cladders" (Drag City) Sounds like Bread with a little mustard or America with a little immigration problem.

High Tension Wires "midnight cashier" (Dirtnap) This is exactly what a punk rock n roll album is supposed to sound like.

The High Water Marks "polar" (HHBTM) Got me high, wet, and marked. Note to band: let the girl sing ALL the songs! She's awesome.

His Electro Blue Voice "fog" b/w "das" (S-S, s-srecords.com) I can't tell you how many hours my friends have tried to convince me that T.S.O.L.'s "Dance with Me" wasn't a prank - a gothy goof designed to piss off politico-h/c zealots. Thusly, you can spend as long as you want trying to convince me that this perfect platter is anything but a "Dance with Me" tribute and you likely will be wasting your breath.

The Holloways "So This Is Great Britain?"(TVT 23 E 4 St NY NY 10003) Hollo-way out!

Hollywood "Girl?" ep (Big Neck) This single actually stuck to the sleeve like pages of a 12 year old kid's porno mag.

Holy Shit! (Criminal I.Q.) Following the lead of Canada's Fucked Up, this genuine hardcore band reveals that nothing's more hardcore than having a name that can't be printed in a newspaper or on a marquee. This is batshit crazy punk rock so intense it scrambled my cortex.

Home Blitz (Gulcher) Like a whiny, rockin' Jandek! Compiles singles and rarities you'll never find, though you may not have been looking for, though maybe you should have been...

Hot Hot Heat "Happiness Ltd. (Sire) Hotter, hotter and heatieir than ever!

Howling Hex "XI" (Drag City) Despite actual honking skills, somehow the sax on this sounds like the sax on X-Ray Spex, which is AWESOME! This has the rock like a geologist's knapsack.

Donny Hue and the Colors "Folkmote" (The Kora Records) Hue's on first? Pleasant mellow psyche-ish music, that's Hue!

Glenn Hughes "Music for the Divine" (Demolition, demolitionrecords.com) Let me first continue my tradition of likely being the only reviewer in America to insist on pointing out that this is not the Glenn Hughes who was the leatherman in Village people (R.I.P. Leather G.H.) but rather the esteemed metal journeyman vocalist. And let me further point out that he is a vocal genius and this album is ambitious, dynamic, and spectacular!

Hungry Ghost (myspace.com/hungryghostband) Hauntingly unremarkable.

Ideal Free Distribution (HHBTM POBox 742 Athens GA 30601) This band sounds exactly like an authentic 60s psyche-tinged pop act, but the act they sound like is some second tier one that isn't that great or original. Yet somehow, what would be dismissible in '67 is actually pretty engaging, bordering on fascinating, in '07. I want to not like this, but I keep on listening and smiling.

I Keee You! A Collection of Overheards (Atomic 1100 W. 36 St. Baltimore MD 21211) The modest ambitions of this comic (illustrations of bizarre snippets of overheard conversation) makes it one of the best anthologies I can remember, certainly the best themed one in a long while. I recall way back yonder when Rip Off Comix tried to do themes, and one was "Vampire Cowboys" and half the artists just riffed on how they couldn't come up with a good vampire cowboy story and the other half demonstrated the same quandary with their shitty comics. By having such a simple, surefire theme this book makes the hodgepodge of styles a bonus instead of a stumbling block.

Ilad "National Flags" (POB 13076 Richmond VA 23225) Ilove!

The Illustrated "Alphabaggage" (Livid, POB 276132 Boca Raton FL 33427) Super dramatic algebra-punk jazz that illustrated a point – the point is this band kicks ass!

Imagination Head "the stale and sparkling air" (myspace.com/jranderin) Acoustic folk-ish/singer-songer rock sung so nasally they should be called Imagination Nose. But good songs.

Immaculate Machine "Immaculate Machine's Fables" (Mint POB 3613 Vancouver BC Canada V6B 3YS) This band has leaned on one of the most tired, outdated gimmicks in music history – they have crafted an album of all great songs! How are bands playing with them in clubs or sharing cyber or CD shelf space supposed to compete with these enchanting, engaging "fables?"

Impious "Holy Murder Masquerade" (Metal Blade) Sonically eviscerated me!

Inca Babies "plutonium" (Anagram/Cherry Red) Forget the forthcoming Madchester, scene, in the early-to-mid eighties this band was Mad Scientist-cester, making Cramps-like horror music, and riffing on Nick Cave's murder music with more consistent creepiness and cinematic flair (although never with the actual grace of the Birthday Party, whom they were often accused of aping). This retrospective seems pretty thorough – I never knew they had more than a couple of albums, and I've heard less than half this stuff, but it's not particularly chronology or history oriented. Rather it's a well-sequenced, strong collection of a strange, somewhat-forgotten band.

Incendiary Words soccer zine (4821 W. Fletcher St. #2 Chicago, IL 60641) Pudgy gets a kick out of soccer! But his bitterness kicks in when he deals with myopic modern history-uninterested soccer fans. Thus, this is, alas, the last issue for a while.

The Ink Spots "Instant Classics" (Cherry Red) I can't not love the Ink Spots, but I also can't fully embrace them, as one ear hears their harmonies teeter towards pre-rock 'n' roll doo wop, and the other listens to them dance around the outer edges of the best Your Hit Parade pop star music, but my brain in the middle never can process them one way or the other. But this is certainly a VERY pleasant (if confusing to me) collection.

Inspector Owl "Life Finds Away"(Third World Industries, thirdworldindustries.com 1342 West Huron #2R Chi IL 60622) Interstellar owl howls that crash land on planet Awesome Rock.

Instant Karma – The Amnesty International Campaign to Save Darfur (Warner Brothers) Like I'm going to say anything bad about Lennon or Darfur.

Intellectuals "invisible is the best" (Dead Beat) Brilliantly stupid and about as intellectual as Iggy making a peanut butter and blood sandwich, this snotty, angular, bucket of rock n roll trash is my favorite platter of the moment.

Intelligence "deuteronomy' (In The Red) Futuristic caveman music that turns trash rock into space age recyclable art product. A record so good you would gay marry it even if you lived In the Red states.

The (International) Noise Conspiracy "Live At Oslo Jazz Festival" (Alternative Tentacles) Swinging Swedes the (International) Noise Conspiracy could be considered a progressive punk band, but only when compared to the regressive nature of their punk brethren. In this reissue of a previously rare album the band ostensibly gets progressive-er by having Swedish jazz musicians sit in with them during a stellar live set at a Swedish festival. But what happens, joyously, is that for the most part the guests begin to harken back to the early days of rock 'n' roll when sax and piano were regular components of swinging combos, and in many ways the band becomes more traditional and old timey. And it is GREAT! Fans of the band will love hearing these versions (it is a pristinely recorded live album, as good as a studio venture) and new fans will really dig this introduction. Plus: all Swedish stage banter!

Ion Dissonance "Minus the Herd" (Abacus) So goddamn Metal this can't get through airport security!

Matt Isbell "Rock Lotto" (no label) Rock Jackpot!

The Its! "M!stakes" (PWMD) The Its is the shit! (or should I say, "the Its! Is the shits!") Angular pop that sounds like the band you would want to be on stage when you walked into a club in your movie before some kind of major plot shift or fight went down.

I Walk the Line "Desolation Street" (Gearhead) Keep stepping'.

the Izzys "The Violent Bear It Away" (Fat Man) Makes Neil Young sound like Neil Old!

Jandek "Austin Sunday," "Newcastle Sunday" DVD (Corwood POB 15375 Houston TX 77220) Having finally caught Jandek live I now understand how his concerts differ from his legendary recording career. His collaborators really define how he will sound, as a pickup band playing with someone as unusual musically as the J-man can't begin to recreate the recordings as you would do backing up Chuck Berry or Tommy Tutone or Arthur Lee. The Newcastle DVD (though it doesn't show anyone but Jandek and occasionally just his shadow) has a band that allows Jandek to sound positively psychedelic at times (the ethereal blue lighting doesn't hurt, either). But the double disc Austin CD is pretty fascinating because it really, really sounds like a Jandek record - -his collaborators have caught Corwood Fever and I was shocked every time the applause kicked in at the end of compositions.

Janelle "The Vocal Complex" (VS) Neo-soul is an uneven genre to deal with; for every Raphael Saadiq who gets it right, there's a Lauryn Hill who reminds you of every bad, humorless, Afro-Boho "love, peace & hair grease" cliche going. If you're still interested in the field, singer-songwriter Janelle is a worthwhile artist to check out. None of that mystic-crystal-revelation malarkey that sidetracked India.Arie - Janelle just tells the story with a groove that takes off from '70s soul without imitating it, keeping the electronic effects and rap cameos to a bare minimum.

Japanther "Stuffed Up My Huffy" (Menlo Park) Did I mention this fucking rules. Seductive pop processed through so much overmodulation and damaged recording equipment that it sounds like it's in your memory somewhere, not on your stereo (or earbuds or harddrive or whatever the kids today use). Contains more clever movie dialogue samples than the Charles Bronson catalogue and a bucket of late 90s metal demos combined.

Jazz June "The Scars To Prove It" (MVD) Though the Jazz June died soon a while back they revived long enough to play some radio shows and concerts and this collection of archival tracks and live stuff and oddities and endities showcases all the things that emo and prog rock have in common: clever song titles, tight musicianship, acceptable smugness, and a sense of humor that might be funny unless they aren't kidding at all in which case, yeesh!

JDJBand "Cruel Way" (RPG POB 913 Lotus CA95651) Five of the ten songs have the word 'Everybody," or "knows" or both in the first line. That's because *everybody knows* this band ROCKS!

The Jennifer Echo "Be Dangerous on Rock Guitar" (Jumping Jupiter 5136 NE Glisan St Portland OR 97213) Ecchhh-o.

Je Suis France "Afrikan Majik" (Antenna Farm POB 29855 Oakland CA 94604) Je *SWEET*! Apparently Kraut Jam is no longer just a spreadable sandwich fixing made of sauerkraut and fruit preserves. Majikally delicious!

Joan as Police Woman "Real Life" (Cheap Lullaby) Joan as Police GODDESS!

George Jones "Live from the Church Street Station" (Quantum Leap) The greatest country singer ever in concert in the early 80s, which is a great time to catch him as he not only can do an old time hit or two but also his Billy Sherrill-produced later masterpieces (is there any better song than "He Stopped Loving Her Today?"). Yet this brief concert, and a few songs by (much) lesser artists, is pretty far from essential. Jones sounds great, but I've seen him a lot more riveting than he is here, and the professional performances don't enhance the material at all. Still, you won't be wasting your time watching the Possum.

Jonesy "Richochet" (Cherry Red) There was a lot of great stuff happening in 1972, but Progedelia was not one of them! Keep it in the vault!

Jon Spencer Blues Explosion "Jukebox Explosion Rockin' Mid-90s Punkers!" (In The Red) I spent a good portion of 90s dismissing the JSBX (as they may have never been called, not sure where I pulled that out of, but I certainly just squandered any space I saved with that abbreviation) because of the blackface minstrel aspect to their work that seemed especially offensive because they were so with it and great-sounding. I'm far more forgiving of some paleskinned loser in a blues club trying to sound like an old Black bluesman because he has no vision or creativity than I am of Spencer and Co. That said, this singles comp is far more pleasing than any of his individual albums, as Spencer always seemed really dedicated to the art of the 45 (sometimes including jukebox inserts in the singles). These are certainly absurd, extra trashy, dumb, and on the edge of offensiveness, but overall these just sound pretty damn well like they mean it. Bonus track where they pretend to be Tupac's ghost over a porno-soundtrack funkline is my personal favorite. And parodying Crypt records' Back From the Grave art is a nice, strange touch (that's already ripe nostalgia/parody/whatever?).

Joshua Jug Band (Gulcher) I like my psychedelia like I like my women:; wild, sloppy, and weird. Thusly, this aroused me.

Joy Division Under Review (Sexy Intellectual) Laziest *Under Review* ever! If you don't know much about Joy Division but your interest was piqued by the dramatic scenes in the movie *24 Hour Party People*, so you want to get the real story – bad news. This DVD licensed clips from *24 Hour Party People* to dramatize scenes. They also pad the brief 70-minute documentary with extensively long clips of everyone they mention. Punk rock preceded Jop Division so here's lotsa Sex Pistols footage. Some of their production nodded towards Phil Spector, so here's a minute of the Ronnettes. The talking heads here are more focused and less absurd than on some of the classic rock titles in this series, but all the same, fans will be underwhelmed and newbies will leave under-informed.

Juicehead "The Devil Made Me Do iT" (Misfits) The least Misfits-related record released on the Misfits label, this is pop punk awash in a sea of nasty, but it's still pop punk. Most surprising thing here is a virulently anti-Bush song, because I always assumed Jerry Only and family would be pretty conservative.

Junkie XL "SSX Blur" (Nettwerk) This electronic Dutch treat is some kind of extreme sports video games soundtrack, supposedly, but it is also functional dancing/action/lovemaking music for people who actually go out in the real world.

Jupiter Watts (Two Sheds) Back when it meant something to say music sounded like it belonged on "college radio" (in the pre-Alternative Rock era) a band like this would be superstars on that no-superstars circuit. Smart guitar rock-pop that's out of this world.

Just the Two of Us DVD, ***That Tender Touch*** DVD (Wolfe POB 64 New Almeden CA 95042) One reason so many people don't like the phrase "Blaxploitation" is that the it implies that black people are being exploited in the movie, when actually the idea was that these films would finally exploit (in a neutral use of that term) the fact that black audiences wanted to see themselves on screen and would pay good money for the it. Thus, as Wolfe Video presents this series of vintage "Dykesploitation" films they are sorta rewriting history. These two low budget flicks (circa the late 60s-early 70s) were not made to serve the lesbian community any more than *Maxim* magazine fantasies of two models kissing is for the sisterhood. That said, since these films were essentially lost (the source prints are beat to hell, which makes the experience of watching more gloriously sleazy and independent) then finders keepers! If they want to recast scummy, low-budget drive-in theater sexploitation flicks with Sapphic-themes as campy vintage entertainment for ladies in The Life, good for them. The presentation is great, with new painted covers made to look like sexy dime novels and slick reprints of the original press books (featuring gloriously lurid art) on the inside. It's hard to say which one is better. Both present lesbianism as something "regular" married people do on the side. *Tender Touch* has better melodrama, as a semi-psycho lesbian shows up to crash the perfect married life of an old flame. But the 60s vibe of *Just the Two of Us*, including period décor, and a tinge of period politics (male oppression is a violent, tangible reality here; note the female director) make it the more appealing of the two.

Katy Mae "The Sweetheart Deal" (Maggadee pob 666 Hoboken NJ 07030) *Mae* be my fave band!

The Ka-Nives!! "Get Duped" (Lance Rock 370 Bruce Avenue Nanaimo BC Canada V0R 3Y1) A Ka-MESS! Trash punk that's trashier and punkier than betting on rodent fights in a squat.

Kapakahi "twisted, bet and confused" (kapakahimusic.com)Catchy Island music-flavored music that avoids the ska-stereotypes of the nineties, while still referencing the catchiest Sublime songs.

Kaspar Hauser "Quixotic/Taxidermy" (Backward Masking) Asskick Hauser!

Dan Kaufman "Force of Light" (Tzadik 200 E. 10· pmb 126 NYC 10003) Am I being "Punk'd?" Is this really what this CD sounds like? This isn't a parody of a pretentious album? Oh…

Robert Earl Keen "Best" (Koch) For nearly two decades Keen has been making some of the best Texas music out there, casting himself as the perfect bar band for a less-than-rowdy honkytonk. This best of gives a good sample of this underappreciated troubadour whose songs tell vivid stories about southern characters and their shenanigans without ever disrespecting or clowning his subjects.

Kelly and David "As The Twilight Auguries" (myspace.com/kellyndavid) Rootsy, but not over-twangy, acoustic but not folksy, and singer-songwritery but not coffeeehousey, this couple is just making some nice American music. These are the best people named Kelly and David in America!

Rob Kendt "I'm not sentimental" (robkendt.com) Like a K.D. Lang with a feminine side Kendt crafts narrative, dramatic lounge/country/theatrical music that makes all the world a stage. Profoundly pleasant.

Kenneth Keith Kallenbach American Icon DVD (MVD) Obviously, the level of humor involved in prank calling someone, not a live broadcast of a national media event, but just a random person, and mentioning Howard Stern's penis, is pretty low. That said I was surprised to find this punishing compilation far from humor-free – included is a standup routine where the jokes and delivery are great. Unfortunately he includes a different performance of the exact same set twice on the DVD. Oh KKK, you slay me!

Amaan Ali Khan & Syaan Ali Khan "Truth" (Koch 740 Broadway NYC 10003) A sarod (a smaller, apparently groovier, sitar) can apparently be utilized when morphing traditional Indian music into smooth electronica. To paraphrase Sammy, Yes I Khan!

The Kill Devil Hills "Heathen Songs" (Bang) I understand why an Australian band is making awesome eerie, American country-music inspired narrative gems (I've got all the Beasts of Bourbon albums). But I can't figure out how they even heard of the pleasant North Carolina beach town they are named after.

The Killers "Leaving Las Vegas" DVD (Pride) You can't really make a documentary (let alone an unauthorized one) on a band that hasn't done much yet. Jabbering Vegas scenesters just sound like scenesters from anywhere, and have about as much to say. More importantly, doing one of these unauthorized things without any of the band's music when you are dealing with a band that can't be considered to have ingrained their music into the collective public consciousness makes for an awkward experience.

Kilion and Mahlon (myspace.com/kilionandmahlon) 26 minutes of a band looking for their house keys...musically.

The Kimballs "Great Face For Radio" (Dowboy, 24 Mill St. #317 Paterson NJ 07501) Great songs for radio...if your station combines '70s AM poppiness with '00s NPR clever wordplay).

King Automatic "I Walk My Murderous Intentions Home" (Voodoo Rhythm) King Automatic make bluesabilly rock-out music that seems to come simultaneously from some evil fantasy version of the 1950s, from a pornographic S&M movie, from the best rock n roll honkytonk you've ever dreamed of, and from Hell.

King-Cat Comics by John Porcellino (POB 18888 Denver CO 80218) I think JP has actually gotten more economical with his linework. Pretty soon he'll paint the whole comic with one single Japanese brushstroke.

King Kong "Buncha Beans" (Drag City) This is the best thing this ape has ever done! Outsider music meets the R&B house band at 4:11 am when only six people are left in the club and they are just operating on soul fumes. This is a buncha magical beans!

King Louie and the Loose Diamonds "Memphis Treet" (Empty POB 12301 Portland OR 97121) King Louie is the Bob Dylan of our generation, and I'm actually not joking. Amazingly this is his sweet pop album, and whatever he's trying to prove he definitely proves it. You are stupid if you don't buy this record.

King of Prussia "Save the Scene" (Kindercore) Prussious but not precious, these romantic rock romps are lush and posh and literate but still totally toe-tap pop grounded.

Arrison Kirby "Part 3" (Eldeth, eldeth.com) Genius as pure as Ivory Soap.

KISS LOVES YOU DVD (8· Grade Films/MVD) I expected this documentary to be some kind of amateurish fan love letter to KISS so I was impressed at the outset that this was technically so sharp, either shot on film stock, or shot by someone who knows how to make video look really good. But as the film unfolded it became clear that this isn't some knock off fan release, this is a genuinely outstanding documentary about the triumphs, tragedies and absurdity of fandom. Many years in the making, this film starts out by visiting East Coast KISS conventions and meeting the members of KISS tribute bands. Then the amazing happens. The original KISS regroups, decides to take over the convention business, and seriously cuts into the tribute business. Most fascinating is the tale of Ace Frehley's number one fan, who found himself helping Ace move and lending him money when the then-deposed KISS guitarist was struggling, but finds their relationship dramatically altered after KISS reunites (I won't ruin the surprise ending of that storyline, but suffice to say that Christopher Guest and his *Waiting for Guffman/Best in Show* posse couldn't have come up with anything better). What I like best about this piece is the localism – KISS, despite all the artifice and worldliness, is a group of regular New York dudes, and this documentary is basically about how regular New York dudes relate to them, from the family that dresses in KISS getups to the bizarrely loyal dude in the Gene makeup to regular guy rockers like Dee Snider and Handsome Dick Manitoba (check out the bonus footage for Dick's tale of how the Dictators got kicked off a KISS tour in the 70s). Absolutely outstanding.

Kit "Broken Voyage" (Upset the Rhythm) Fucked up noise music that is also incredibly pleasant happy melody music.

Kitty and the Kowalskis "Chinese Democracy" (Amp 153 Balsam Ave South Hamilton Ontario Canada L8M 3B6) Punky Power pop sounds a lot better in a short skirt than a skinny tie. If you couldn't listen to this classic NYC bowery rock n roll all day then there is something wrong with you.

Kitty and the Manges "Joey's Song" ep (It's Alive 11411 Hewes St. Orange CA 92869) The same Kitty as the Kowalski above (who, though forever youthful, is a NYC institution) teams up with punk veterans the Manges for a Ramones/Elvis/Cyndi Lauper-lovefest. Strangely sublime, and not so strangely, does not sound like Sublime.

Knife the Symphony (Phraty POB 14267 Cincinnati OH 45250) Epic sonic artrock knifeplay that shanked my musical inhibitions.

Kodagain "I Want to Tg-d, Tg'd,...," "1985-92," "Commercial" (Listen Loudest) This band is ten times better than U2! Call them U20!

Anna Kramer and the Lost Cause "The Rustic Contemporary Sounds of..." (International Hits) Big musical chunks of Happy! Ms. Kramer knows how to party. Even when she sings about losers and bad stuff she makes it sound great!

The Krum Bums "As The tide turns" (TKO) I think one might dub this regal Pirate Metal, but I'm a little out of touch with nautical marauder music. But it certainly shivered my timbers.

The K's "Can't Get it Together" (theKsBand.com) I give this all A's!

Kukuriku Street "S/T," "anarhija" (Listen Loudest) These CDs are seriously ambiant, and I am a serious ambi-ant-eater!

Kyle Mann Combo "Goodbye Kites" (kylemanncombo.com) Should be called Kyle Whiny Mann Combo.

The Ladies and Gentleman "Ladies and Gentleman..." (no label) Dudes and dudettes...I present to you, Chicago's rockiest rockin' rockers!

Laika Dog "Mercury" (laikadog.com.uk) To paraphrase Bob Seger, "Laika Rocks!"

Joe Lally "There to Here," "Nothing Is Overrated" (Dischord) Striking, simple yet still dynamic songs that balance powerful thoughtful lyrics with awesome instrumentation drawing from rock, funk, blues, and everywhere else. At first I didn't think these recording held up to the live show which really knocked me out, but after a dozen listens these versions have grown on me and seem pretty pure and amazing.

Lamps (In The Red) A blinding rainstorm of rock n roll.

Landslide "Sink Without Fail" (Locomotive) Shitslide.

Alycia Lang "She Do That" (DoThat) What a voice! Ms. Lang's singing will make you love the world.

The Laureates "I Want to Miss You" ep (laureatesmusic.com) Resonant, strong vocals anchor this marriage of 60s Brit jangle and modern indie rock, making this a bit of a joy. New bands take note: see...you are *not* required to get a whiny singer.

Zanya Laurence "Soul Theory..." (Soul Spot, zanyamusic.com) This Soul Proprietress demonstrates that slick neo-post-hip-hop soul really is dependent on production. All of this sounds good, her voice is clear and expressive, the songwriting sounds professional, and nothing sounds cheap. Yet, this is obviously a production-step below what''s on the radio and it's a huge step. Nothing pops out here, but as an artist Ms. L has a shot if she hooks up with a big dog 9and not a Smoke Dawg, whose cameo is representative of the C-List vibe).

LCDD "Experimentos con Doo-Rags" (C-Ear, circulo(guinobajo)ear@yahoo.es) Los Caballos de Dusseldorf present experimental music made with "Doo-Rags," defined here as strange little electronic noisemakers. This non-band ("...everyone playing a doo-rag can use the name for play or recording...") makes magnificent sounds that range from dub to noise to space fights to carnival audio. BLAMbient!.

LCD Soundsystem "45:33" (DFA/EMI) This six-movement musical journey surprisingly sounds like being in a Chicago House music club circa 1987 (except for the ethereal last movement), with a great ear for both what was on black radio and what Euro-stuff was popular in the hood at the time. Along with the new Sam Sparro Cd this heralds a weird, new era for irony-free appreciation of 80s urban music.

Leadfinger "the floating life" (Bang! POB 166 Santurtzi 48980 Bizkaia Basque Country Spain) A solo album by the Aussie guitar icon with the poison digit, this gets the rock out, including an awesome Thin Lizzy tribute and some pretty good pretty music.

Alvin Lee "Saguitar" (Rainman) It is hard to argue against a man doing what he does so well. Lee just makes blues rock without affectation, bullshit, or pretense. And when he records today he doesn't make any bad judegements in attempts to be current – I mena it's not like he puts a rap song on here! OK, well he actually thinks he did, but it's actually just a bass heavy blues rocker with semi-spoken rhyme lyrics. No sagging here!

Leftover Crack/Citizen Fish split CD (Fat) You put your quirky ska in my metallic punk! *You put your metallic punk in my quirky ska!* Hey, it's delicious!

Ted Leo and the Pharmacists ""Living with the Living" (Touch and Go) Despite only having one song on this album with a girl's name as the title, this is still the top power pop album of the 21· century!

Le Scrawl "Full Frontal Nudity" DVD (Life Is Abuse) POB 20524 Oakland CA 94620) I was never sure if this absurdist art noise jazz rock band was joking, but after seeing this tour documentary I can say without a sliver of doubt that I still don't know. If you dig their crazy, brilliant slabs of audio this will make you like them more.

George Lewis Jr. "Hold Me" (Make or Break, makeorbreakrecords.com) High lonesome blues sounds that tell some spooky, moody stories, snuck in the middle is a rocker called "Re-Prize" that would tear it up a skeleton hootenanny!

Jerry Lee Lewis "Last Man Standing" (Shangri-La Entertainment CD). Well, it took ten years for a follow-up to "Young Blood," Jerry Lee's severely underrated (well, it's hard for most people to rate something they've never heard) previous effort, and I have to say, I wasn't too keen on the concept for the new album. I mean, what did they do to Frank Sinatra and Ray Charles before they put them out to pasture? They made 'em do "DUETS" ALBUMS! It wasn't just the idea of a "Duets" album that rubbed me the wrong way, it was also several of the choices for duets. On first inspection, I found that most of this goes down easy, with virtually none of Jerry Lee's song partners stepping on his toes, and, on top of that, it sounds better the more I play it. The opener, an unrepentant version of Led Zeppelin's "Rock 'n' Roll," with Jimmy Page on lead guitar, fulfills the promise of the original. Take it from a man with NO interest in Post-Yardbirds Jimmy Page. Mick Jagger and Ron Wood check in with an outstanding original, "Evening Gown," which comes on like early 70s Stones AND early 70s Jerry Lee at the same time. Keith Richards turns up later on the sympathetic Honky Tonk moaner, "That Kind of Fool," written by Mack Vickery (who wrote The Killer's theme song-one of many, but still the best-"Meatman"), and, surprisingly, Keef's leather-lunged vocal interplay with Jerry Lee's solid Country gold voice, which has actually improved in recent years, makes me think just one thing: "Gram's diggin' it." Lux and Ivy recently said that JLL has a higher part in his voice that wasn't there a few years ago. It's true, I learned that the last time I saw him play. It's as though Jimmie Rodgers himself were using Jerry Lee to say what he can no longer say himself. Besides, to agrue with Lux and Ivy would be like talking back to my Mom and Dad. The fact that The Stones got back to their Country roots on this effort, instead of saying, "Aw, let's just do a Chuck Berry number " (and, even though The Rolling Stones kicked ass all over Lennon and McCartney's own "I Wanna Be Your Man," Ringo Starr does a very respectable, and fun, "Sweet Little Sixteen," here, too) speaks volumes. Speaking of volume, run for the volume knob and TURN IT DOWN when Kid Rock checks in to stink up Jerry Lee's second-ever Stones cover (His Bizarro World version of "Satisfaction," which was omitted from "The Session" Double LP set, must be heard to be believed!), "Honky Tonk Women," not a bad choice for Jerry Lee a'tall, but I could probably think of 50 others that would've been better, starting with "Bitch," "Sweet Virginia," "Torn and Frayed," "Rip This Joint," or even "Star, Star." To be fair, the inferior quality of this track (when placed against the others) can't be blamed solely on Kid Rock. The Southern Rock Boogie Butt female backing singers got on my nerves, too. I can see the suede fringe vests, feathered earrings, baby blue eyeshadow, and late 70s designer jeans from here. Jerry Lee and John Fogerty really smoke on the CCR Little Richard cop, "Traveling Band" (which, amazingly, Richard didn't cover in the early 70s, when it seemed like he and Bo Diddley were arm wrestling for the CCR songbook). The Killer goes from strength to strength, and, even though his Country side remains soulful and emotive, give him a good rocker and it's all over but the cryin'. If the former track doesn't bear this out, your CD player malfunctioned, and skipped over it, but the dream duets of a lifetime are yet to appear on this very CD. Little Richard, I SAID THE BEAUTIFUL LITTLE RICHARD!!! COME ON, EVERYBODY, SCREAM LIKE A WHITE LADY!!! WOOOOOOOOOOO!!! The two most explosive personalities of their generation. Will they rock or will they fight? Will they even be able to fit both those egos on the same session? The verdict: They ROCK, of course, but Richard doesn't get nearly enough vocal time in, and, besides, he already covered "I Saw Her Standing There" nearly 40 years ago. If they HAD to do a Beatle tune on this historic occasion (they HAVE performed on stage together, but, never in a studio, to my knowledge), I would have opted for "I'm Down," but, this isn't my project. That distinction would go to Jimmy Rip (Is this the same Jimmy Rip who played with Busta Jones and Jay Dee Doherty in what was probably the only Garage Punk/Disco crossover band, ever, The Seclusions?) and Steve Bing, and, yes, they did do a helluva job. Still, I'm perplexed. I'd read this set was going to consist only of songs Jerry Lee had never done before, but, several tunes have been in his repertoire for years, like "Sweet Little Sixteen," "Trouble In Mind" (with a surprisingly tasteful, and not boring, Eric Clapton solo), "Hadacol Boogie" (same observation applies, here, to Buddy Guy, who sings and plays with the same gusto

as his drunkest " I LOVE YOU MUTHAFUCKIN' PEOPLE, AND THAT'S NO SHIT" headlining shows at his own club in Chicago. It may or may not be brimming with taste, but, it's sure brimming with FUN!), and, surely, he's done "Lost Highway" at some point (this version is nearly killed by Delaney Bramlett's constipated lead vocal), and, who could forget Jerry Lee's own Country comeback classic, "What's Made Milwaukee Famous (has Made a Loser Out of Me")," which is handled here as an unaccompanied (save for The Killer's after hours piano) duet with Rod Stewart (who covered the song, himself, on his own first wave of solo fame). The pub gets converted into a honky tonk, but everyone walks out smiling. I even read something eluding to a STOOGES cover coming out of these sessions. I wonder if that's true. The high point of the album has GOT to be the Bob Wills classic, "Don't Be Ashamed of Your Age", performed with George Jones. WHY it's taken so long for the Killer and The Possum to record a duet is anybody's guess, but the camaraderie between these two music legends sounds genuine and sincere, much like when Jones recorded "We Didn't See A Thing" with Ray Charles. The same is true of Jerry Lee's duet with Merle Haggard, "Just a Bummin' Around," but I'm on that VERY small list of Country music fans who's not Merle-Haggard (Despite the fact that Clint Strong, his former guitarist, and I, were good friends through High School and College, and we WILL catch up sometime, like all these old pals have), tho' it ain't personal. Bottom line, what seemed like a bad idea, at first, has proven to be a wonderful album, for the most part. Through his aged-to-perfection vocals and piano playing, and his keen-as-ever ability to make any song his own, Jerry Lee has reaffirmed his claim to being "One of the four fucking stylists that ever lived. The late, great Jimmie Rodgers, The late, great Al Jolson, The late, great, Hank Williams.....," and, of course, The Great Jerry Lee Lewis, Last Man Standing. This just in: "Last Man Standing now has a live DVD companion piece, featuring a whompass performance by The Killer, still singing and playing piano with most of the same fervor he displayed in his 20s (which, many people will argue, wasn't even his "Prime"). He looks pretty rough, it's true, but the natural beauty of Jerry Lee's singing renders the effects of age and wild living irrelevant. The All-Star supporting cast includes standout performances by Tom Jones and Solomon Burke (Kid Rock should have been bumped off the CD in favor of both these true music legends), as well as John Fogerty, Buddy Guy, Merle Haggard, Chris Isaak, Kris Kristofferson, Ron Wood, Norah Jones and Ivan Neville, and, wouldn't you know it, Kid Rock, who makes me glad that I can at least go on to the next performance, featuring Jerry Lee's right hand man of some 40 years, and a super nice guy, Kenny Lovelace (who was briefly married to Jerry Lee's sister, Linda, who joked that, for a short time, she was "Linda Lovelace"). Boy, this thing's just too cool. "It's a HIT!" Think about it,

Let's Go Sailing "the chaos in order" (Yardley Pop) When I think sailing music I think Dennis DeYoung calling me "lad" or Christopher Cross breaking easy listening ground. But no longer – I now will sail on a sea of precious loveliness in a marshmallow boat led by the innocent Siren's song of Shana Levy's breathy voice!

Letterbomb "Airing of Grievances" (letterbomb.net Mas Music 7110 W. Cullom #207 Norridge IL 60706) Letter rip! This is just plain old rock music, and that's what you probably need right about now.

Lewk Pewk & the Vomit (nothing resembling an record lable or address) Two sets of trashy drunk punk rock (one from 1990, one from 2006) done with the kind of nasty, offensive flair and fervor that only true musical miscreants can draw from. If your mom doesn't hate this, you should probably never let her babysit your kids.

Leyode "Fascinating Tininess" (Eastern Developments, easterndevelopments.com) Leyawns.

Ligion "External Affairs"(MJR) This band will lig your ions!

Listen to the Sky – The collected Recordings 1964-73 (Rev-Ola) Two brits spend the heart of the 60s trying to make it in blues-rock/psyche pop under several monikers (Others, Sands &Sun Dragons) mostly knocking off other, mostly American artists' hits (they actual chart with a version of "Green Tambourine"). If you'd rather hear their versions of Howlin' Wolf and Bee Gees songs then this is for you. But, somehow they m worte and recorded a rather beloved psyche pop in the title track. Unfortunately theie later stuff, as Sun Dragon is mostly originals and mostly pretty unoriginal (though "Peacock Dress" is as good as the title). Still, super slick super pro psyche pop is always pretty good, and always more entertaining that Devandra Barnyard.

Listing Ship "A Hull Full of Oil and Bone" (myspace.com/listingship) Progressive old time-sorta music that has vocals that lean towards hypnotizing Shaggs-invoking unison-singing despite demonstrating proficient skill in ethereal harmony.

Little Brazil "Tighten the Noose" (Mt Fuji) Little Borezil

Little Name "How to Swim and Live" (Sleepy) La de da music with a touch of upbeat pixie dust (not the druggy kind, the actual enchanted kind).

Little Walter "Stray Dog Blues" (Rev-Ola) Most of the classic blues icons are geniuses of presentation, mood, and soul, but few are virtuosos. Little Walter was, and in my book his harmonica playing is as impressive as any jazzbo's or classical musician's chops. This fine CD showcases some of his best work, and if you don't know what I'm talking about, here's your chance.

Live From Hurrah's NEW YORK CITY DVD (Morada Vision c/o Audio Fidelity, 870 East Front Street, Ste. 3, Ventura, California, 93001) D'yever notice that when people talk or write about the 70s-early 80s punk/New Wave scene in New York City, clubs like the reconstituted Peppermint Lounge and even The Mudd Club barely warrant even a brief mention. While CBGB's and Max's Kansas City are, historically, very important, they weren't the only game in town. Hurrah's was one such club, largely forgotten by those relegated to documenting the "scene," but, remembered by those who were actually there. This DVD comes with a somewhat misleading cover, featuring a guy in a mohawk Jean Beauvoir would probably admire and decidedly "punk" graphics. Just as Spike Lee might have misled some people into believing the punk rockers at CBGB's were sporting green G.B.H mohawks in 1977 (my Sister-in-Law was down on the scene, and she told me only Richie Stotts from The Plasmatics, if anybody, had a mo' that early), the cover art might make some people think, "Wow! This'll be like seeing The Cro-Mags and Agnostic Front without getting my head kicked in!" But, it's not like that. Most of the bands included here probably fall under the "Post Punk" or "New Wave" heading. The DVD consists of handheld (but, surprisingly good) video footage in a venue that sort of looks like someone's basement rec room/club house, which is actually pretty charming. The danger alluded to on the cover quickly turns to innocence. People dancing to Rock n' Roll. Makes me nostalgic, and I'm not that old. The early Go-Go's start things off, and they sound pretty good, though the lack of any good shots of Jane Wiedlen should be punishable by law. Oh, well. The Fleshtones make a standout appearance, here, and if you thought they looked like The Little Archies in *Urgh!*, they look like they had to get into their own gig with fake I.D.s, here!!! One of their first releases, "Fascination", is engaging without being in your face. Both that, and the uncredited instrumental, "Atom Spies," still turn up in their live set from time to time (The Action Combo, a Tones offshoot, also make with a cool honkin' sax instro). Buzz and The Flyers, one of the earliest Rockabilly bands with a Black frontman, also get two songs in, closer to Robert Gordon in feel and spirit, but, who's to say that's a bad thing? The Raybeats, featuring latter day Los Straitjacket guitarist, Danny Amis, lay down a frenetic version of "Pipeline," listed here as "Static." The Mo-Dettes, fronted by the very sexy Ramona, play their single, a considerably altered version of "Paint it, Black." I would've rather heard one of their own songs, but the rarity of this, and all clips featured here, renders criticism irrelevant (but, I knew that when I sat down to write this). The Waitresses' pre-hit version of "I Know What Boys Like" is light years away from their performance on *Square Pegs*, with the theatricality of an off-off-off Broadway show. Defunkt was an all-Black ensemble, lay down the HARD Funk (and I DON'T mean the slap bass variety) like they'd seen The Contortions somewhere, and said, "Hell, we can do better than that!" The Au Pairs perform the same song they did in *Urgh!*, "Come Again." It sounds really good, here, and I guess I never noticed what a looker their lead singer was. Magazine fans should take note, however: There is a band listed as Magazine, here, but, they're not THE Magazine. Otherwise, there's artists as diverse as Snakefinger, Lene Lovich, Bongos, Bush Tetras, Del-Byzanteens, Our Daughter's Wedding (not "Lawn Chairs," alas), Method Actors, Skids, Teardrop Explodes, and THEN some. New York's all right if Punk's not the only item on your deli tray!

Live at the Rock'nRoll Palace Vols. 1 & 2 DVDs, ***Rock N Rolls Greatest Teen Idols*** DVD, ***The Platters and Coasters*** DVD, ***Johnny Tillotson*** DVD, ***Bobby Vee*** DVD, ***Martha Reeves*** DVD, ***The Shirelles*** DVD(Quantum Leap) While I love "oldies" music, and seeing elder statesmen of rock 'n' soul perform, I have been pretty vocal about how dismal those PBS oldies concerts shows are, with their lifeless audiences and terrible, dull shots of a wide, brightly lit, boring stage with some boring old people on it. They never capture the importance of these pioneers or the energy of the music. These DVDs, shot at some kind of an oldies theme theater in Orlando, Florida don't do a much better job, but at least the scale and the unpretentious presentation, and the silly geriatric bobbysoxers on the small dance floor convince you this music is fun. Of course, with the vocal groups like the Coasters and Platters God can't even figure out how the personnel relate to the original or classic lineups, but some of the solo performers on here, particularly Del Shannon and Sam Moore, still have some fire and soul (Bobby Vee sounds OK, but that white sweater and those twist moves were too much for me to deal with). The MVP of these is the great saxophonist Ace Cannon, who seems as vital and amazing as ever. And I LOVE Martha Reeves version of oldies which is so glitter/futuristic/oddly vibrato-ridden that it sounds like some singer on *Star Trek*. The timelessness of these acts makes it weirder that you can't tell if these were taped in 1977 or 2007 (that said, you can tell The Shirelles were taped in the 80s, becase of the outfits, and because Doris is alive, and because it is one of the worst vocal lineups of pickup-Shirelles she ever worked with. On the same disc bonus tracks of the Dixie Cups show how it should sound). Also, they all seem to start in the middle of a concert. But despite these disc's limitations, even the hokiest acts here seem to know how to please a crowd, so all you Jive Five, Diamonds, Paul Anka and Bryan Hyland fans take note – this may be a goofy series, but it's pretty pleasant. When Korn is playing the Rock 'n' Roll Palace in 2023 I assure you it won't be this fun.

Loch Lomond "Paper the Walls" (Hush POB 12713 Portland OR 97212) I loch it!

Locksley "Don't Make Me Wait" (myspace.com/locksley) Perfect on point power pop that makes you fall in love and feel like you are covered in syrup!

lo-fi suicide "last trip to the golden gate (?) Made me kill myself.

Jeff London "The Bane of Progress" (Hush POB 12713 Portland OR 97212)I don't know if London's dreaming, but I do know that London's dreamy!

Lonely China Day "Sorrow" (Tag Team 115 N. Kenmore suite 3 LA, CA 90004) Boring China Pattern.

Parker Longbough "Commander Comatose" (Wilderhood POB 1076 Kalilof Alaska 99610) Mellow indie clouds of awesomeness.

Long John Thomas and the Duffs "Presenting..." (Wormtone 3837 King St. Denver CO 80211) Although these dudes are clearly pretending to be British, who cares – these guys are the real deal, making joyful noise that does for for Skiffle what the Kaisers did for Beat music. And if somehow they are actually British, and still can't get the British accents right, then they are the best band ever! Skiffle- taste the rainbow!

Lords of Light "Energy" (Life Is Abuse/Little Deputy/625 Thrash) Prog Noise Rock? Strangely all of over the map rock genius explosions!

Los Straitjackets with The World Famous Pontani Sisters and Kaiser George "Twist Party" (Yep Roc) Los Straitjackets are among the few survivors of the brief Instrumental Rock Boom of the 90s. Granted, they play better than more of their peers did, but they've kept things interesting by bringing vocalists on the road with them (e.g. Peter Zaremba from The Fleshtones and Big Sandy, who's currently on tour with the band, and appears, with Los Lobos' Caesar Rosas, on their next album, a tribute to the kickass Mexican Rock n' Roll of the 60s), and, of course the talented, and better looking than your girlfriend, Pontani Sisters, to lively things up with some "Interpretive Dance." You can't see them dancing on a CD, of course, but the accompanying CD more than makes up for that. Also in their favor is the fact that their live show, wherein lies their real strength, is always entertaining and engaging, with or without the super-friend guest stars. Like guitarist, Eddie Angel's, ancient ancestor's band, The Neanderthals, Los Straitjackets are on a noble mission to reclaim The Twist. Now that Swing is dead (for the second time), it's time for a dance you don't need lessons to figure out. There's nothing elitist about making a damn fool of yourself. Besides, if it was good enough for Jackie Kennedy, it's good enough for the highbrows out there (provided, of course, any of them actually read this magazine!). This album is a considerably stripped down affair. That's not a put-down, it's just that it focuses on simple rhythms, uncluttered by big, fat guitar solos (even though we love that about Los Straitjackets, they can still turn around and show you less is more). Guest barry sax player, Deke Dickerson, provides the same kind of sparse magic that filled the dance floor when The Wailers destroyed at last year's Ponderosa Stomp. Bassist, Pete Curry also offers up some gen-yew-ine Garage Punk keyboard fills, too (Curry DID, after all, play briefly with The Chocolate Watchband, and, later, join the CWB offshoot, Tingle Guild). Relatively new drummer, Jason Smay, falls right in with the no-frills, mo' kills big beat that makes you wanna jump in the back seat. As for the frontline guitarists, Eddie Angel and Danny "Daddy-O Grande" Amis, they're still bringing back the 20th Century with real class. Vocalist, Kaiser George, of course, goes WAY back with Eddie Angel, to the mid-90s, when The Kaisers rocked it THREE NIGHTS STRAIGHT with The Neanderthals and The Planet Rockers here in Chicago. He's sinced honed his act with Los Luchadoros De Rock n" Roll for a few years, now, touring

as a guest singer and emcee, so this album was just a matter of time. He still invokes the spirit of the pre-Epstein Beatles, as well as more "Polite" stuff like Gerry Marsden (don't be at my door with a cricket bat, George, I say it as a compliment). The group leans less toward Surf, here,in their instrumentals (for the last time, they never were a "Surf" band, that's just one part of their chemical makeup), and more toward the Twist and Go Go instrumentals you may already know about, if picking up 60s Discotheque records is your thing (you know, those exploitation records that could have featured anyone from Otis Redding to Lou Reed). In all, 16 short, sharp shocks, my favorites being " All Back To Drac's," "Hypno-Twist," "Twistin' Gorilla" and a stop-on-a-dime reading of "Peppermint Twist," always the climax of their act when Los Straitjackets and Kaiser George get together to raise the roof. If Ray Dennis Steckler ever returns to filmmaking in earnest, here's his soundtrack. Speaking of films, Los Rockin' Technicos (good Guys) and The Wonder Women put together their own hilarious and easy on the eyes (hey, I didn't make ME) short flicks, which await your perusal. The ladies will enjoy learning some new "Go-Go Robics," the men will just enjoy the view. The video is crammed with low budget Sci-Fi fun. Parts of it were even filmed at Coney Island! You'll notice, however, Los Straitjackets don't appear in it too much. All the more incentive to go see them live, and that, my friends, IS too much!

Los Straitjackets "Rock En Espanol" (Yep Roc, P.O. Box 4821, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 27515. yeproc.com, redeyeusa.com, straitjackets.com) is the highly anticipated Mexican Rock n" Roll tribute album by Los Straitjackets, who've recorded classics of the genre (which kind of peaked in the early-to-mid 60s, and consisted mostly of considerably wilder versions of British and American Rock n' Roll favorites), mainly with Big Sandy (who is in his glory when he sings this stuff), but, this is the first time they've recorded a whole album in this vein. Although guitarist, Danny Amis ("The Not-So-Quiet One"), speaks fluent Spanish, and is quite the historian on MRR, to the extent that he's seen most of the original, still-existing, bands in Mexico City, and assures me that most of them are still great, the vocals are handled entirely by guest singers, Big Sandy, Caesar Rosas from Los Lobos, and VERY special guest, Little Willie G. from the fantastic Thee Midnighters (who have a killer comp out, now, on Norton. Pick up on it!). His appearance on this session brings us full circle, as Thee Midnighters reigned on the East L.A. Latino ballroom circuit, coming up with their own unique blend of Soul, Rn"B, and Garage Rock, just as assuredly putting their own stamp on Anglo and Afro-American sounds as groups in Mexico, like Los Teen Tops, Los Apson, Los Johnny Jets and Los Locos Del Ritmo, did. Los Straitjackets complement all these fine singers to the highest power, and, so, in turn, do they, whether it be Shake, Twist, Surf, Balada or Garaje (all these song descriptions, barring the last one, frequently turn up in handy song-by-song run downs on Mexican and South American Rn"R LPs of The 60s). The band sets a pretty big flame under Big Sandy's ass on the opener, "De Dia Y De Noche" (all Day and All of The Night), and if he didn't hit the cieling, you will. MUY rockin', homes! "Dame Una Sena" (Gimme Little Sign) shows another side of Big Sandy's bag, with some keen Soul phrasing (Brenton Wood, I'm told, is still huge with the Low Riders in East L.A), with which he attains true excellence on "Lagrimas Solitarias" (Lonely Teardrops). In any language, if you can't bring the listener damn near to tears, don't attempt to do a Jackie Wilson song. While Sandy and band alike rock out like teen canteen U.S.A. or Los Estados Unidos De Mexico on "Calor" ("Slow Down"), As per Los Apson's muy loco version, they do a surpisingly faithful reading of Marty Robbins' "Devil Woman" (only a surprise in the context in which it's presented), with some tasty Spanish guitar parts and, again, some soulful vocalizing. Another rockin' highlight is "La Hiedra Venenosa" (Poison Ivy), which was a hit in Mexico for Los Rebeldes De Rock, who had the distinction of featuring a Black lead singer (footage of Rebeldes De Rock, Locos Del Ritmo, Los Crazy Boys, and others can be seen on youtube, though it's from a 70s TV special. Good performances, just the same). Caesar Rosas wails on a screamin' version of "El Microscopico Bikini," which is actually a reworking of "Dizzy Miss Lizzy, done originally by Los Apson (THEE easiest Mexican Rn"R band to find reissues on...they didn't always nail it, but almost none of their stuff is bad).The guitars are cranked up high enough to break glass, and that's GOOD! Rosas also shines on "Popotitos", or Bony Maronie, as per the fantastic Los Teen Tops' (if you like it WILD in the Little Richard/Rockabilly vein, start with these hombres) and "Dejenme Llorar," actually an original by Los Freddys, who're apparently still moderately popular in Mexico, today. Ahhhhh, but, now, Quetzecoatl must come down from the mountain and spread his multicoloured wings over the true believers (and I don't mean Los Hermanos Escovedo, though they're nice guys) whose god wears shades...Little Willie G., still in beautiful voice, and still just as handy with a rocker or a ballad, sings lead on just three songs, but leaves a lasting impression, nonetheless. Ana (Anna), the Arthur Alexander/Beatles ballad in which the hero throws in the towel so his lady love can leave him for someone else, benefits from his resonant vocals. His voice sounds none the worse for wear, and real singers only sound better with age, BUT, do you think John Lennon could have ever been so easy?! Me neither. "Hang on Sloopy," as "Hey Lupe," has been covered by dozens of Mexican bands (the name change was an easy transition, and they like mind numbingly simple 2-4 Frat Rock as much as we do!), and Little Wille G. breathes new life into this arguably overdone standard. Speaking of which...Little Willie G. also gets his dos centavos in with an insane reading of "Loco Te Patina El Coco" (Wild Thing) with crazy tempo changes and a fiery fuzztone solo that borders on Stoogelike proportions. It might surprise you to know Little Willie G. AND Los Straitjackets played it pretty close to the cover version by Juan El Matematico. Boy, this rocks. I'm at a loss for much else to tell you about it. What we have here is a tastefully constructed collection of songs done in tribute to a bonafide musical genre that's still widely unknown outside of it's homeland (and, even there, you'd be hard pressed to find too many people who give a shit. Just as a lot of young people in Japan think the wild "Group Sound" music is for squares, tuff Mexican Rock 'n' Roll is considered Oldies music by a lot of younger people in Mexico). Rock 'n' Roll eats it's young and vice versa. At any rate, Los Straitjackets have turned in yet another fine performance, making many, very familiar, songs, sound new again. If you're looking for instrumentals, there's only one, Thee Midnighters' classic, "Whittier Boulevard", which sounds like cruising with the top down and a busted speedometer down the street that is the song's namesake, but, there's plenty of A-#1 musicianship, though, not at the cost of losing that edge, which is what makes the originals sound so damned good today.

Lost in the Trees "Time Taunts Me" (Trekky 104 Carolina Forest Rd. Chapel Hill, NC 27516) Keeping it real – orchest-real!

Louis "Freak Show Revenge" (superphonic) Gooey.

loudQUIETloud – a film about THE PIXIES (MVD) You have two things happening here: On the one hand this documentary about the clinical, opportunistic, not particularly friendly Pixies reunion is about as polite and soulless as the band's interactions with each other. Only the drummer, who has become a practicing magician, a dabbler in self-medication, and who has a nicely documented, but overall inconsequential, onstage musical breakdown in the film, is actually "interesting." However, this film also re-reveals to me how incredibly powerful, joyous, and unique the band's music is. I do not pull those albums out, which is obviously a mistake, as one thing that is positive about the band becoming cold professionals is that they can play the fuck out of these amazing tunes and they sound incredible. Though this cannot be mistaken for a thrilling documentary, as far as the music, this is a great document.

Lovely Crash "Buddha Car" (Tokyo Rose) Give them all your loveluy cash! Rock n Roll that's both trashy and classy with a powerful lady running the show like Ilsa!

Lover! (Empty POB 12301 Portland OR 97212) This is what Memphis music is supposed to sound like – dirty rock n roll with soul and grit, and just enough danger to scare your mom a little (even if most mom's now have tattoos).

Lena Lovich "Live From New York at Studio 54" (MVD) Man is this a good concert! What a dynamic, amazing, hypnotizing performer, at her peak. Absurdity, witch powers, and teutonic disarmingness have never been utilized as gloriously as when Lena counts her luckey numbers and you count your lucky stars for seeing it.

W. W Lowman "Plain Songs" (Arbouse Recordings) Lushly orchestral near-epics that made this lowman a high man on the pop totem pole

Lucky Bastard (ytamericanbulldogs.com) A possessed guitar wails devil tongue lashings that lick the surface world until everything becomes permanently sticky.

Lucky Stiffs "Gold In Peace. Iron in War" (Pirates Press, piratespressrecords.com) Somewhere between Emo sensitivity and Oi! Meatheadedness lies a realm of righteously rocking, even-tempered punk rock sensibility and these stiffs rule that realm.

Ludicra (Life Is Abuse) Black Metal that gets in the pocket and transports you to whatever mystical nether-realm your belief system affords. As always, vinyl is awesome, but the low key bonus video clips on the CD are killer.

thomas lunch "diagrams without instructions" (thomaslunch.com) Quirkiness, futuristic-ishness, and pop friendliness all infused with actual rocking.

Mabel Lynch "Letting Go" (Moremusicsales.com) Lynch is a sultry chanteusse whose classic voice has the tone and experience behind it to convince you that if she's telling you how love goes, she knows.

The Mabuses "Mabused" (Magpie) A hook-filled, guitar pop, sweet-voxed journey into sound from this sorta supergroup (Jesus and Mary Chain and Siouxsie appear o this band's family tree) that amuses as well as mabuses.

Machina "Sad IliNikao" (Slusaj Najglasnije!) Scary!

Mad Caddies "Keep It Going" (Fat, fatwreck.com) This CD is showcases a rare creature: a ska/reggae/punk group that actually makes nuanced, grooving, quality music that isn't the equivalent of a dreadlocked minstrel show. Mad good!

Magic Whistle comics by Sam Henderson (Alternative Comics) Now that shit's funny!

Magik Markers "Boss" (Ecstatic Peace) Redefines "dreamy" in a way that should keep psychiatrists and sleep disorder experts in gravy for years.

The Mag Seven "The Future Is Ours, If You Can Count" (endsounds.com) Sleazy punked out surf instrumentals that brings to mind hanging ten inside a syringe!

Mainliners Crusher, crusherrecords.com) Abandoning their trashy garage/blues roots these Swedish meatballs have morphed into a classic rock/pop/stadium anthem/70s ballad band, and while most of my readers will agree that this I, in general, a sad progression (who needs to grow up?), I will say they are jarringly good at this stuff.

Makeoutmusic "Get Off My Soapbox" (Makeoutmusic 484 Canoe Hill Rd. Millbrook NY 12545) Make revolution music!

The Maladies (Darkjoy) Mal-oderous.

Mansbestfriend "poly.sci.187" (Anticon, anticon.com) I generally am confused as to why Anticon artists seem to think there music is good hip hop, but I'm delighted to report that I'm confused this time as to why they think this series of soundscapes and audio experiments even relates to hip hop in any way. Whenever a groove does kick in it's so treated and buried that it's almost subliminal. And if I have to listen to anything from an underground rap collective I really appreciate if they keep it out of my actual consciousness.

Mancino "Manners Matter" (Mancinomusic.com)

Mannequin Men "Private School" b/w "Sewers" (Criminal I.Q.) Goddamn, these are two killer rocking songs! This band is just fucking awesome!

Marinada "S/T," "U Rijeci Kesi Pada" (Listen Loudest) Primitively futuristic music that is old wave new wave. Marinaded me in an awesome music sauce!

Scott Marrow "For All the Time You Spent Losing...You Better Enjoy Your Failures" (Whiteroom, whiteroomrecords.com) Marrowvelous! Weirdly wonderful futuristic primitive music.

Masuretti "Comet" (Ceperion) Ethereal eighties Euro-music referencing sounds that are so futuristic you may not be able to buy this CD until 2041. Somehow this is powerfully driving while being as airy as a flaky pastry. This almost ghostly music will give you a welcome haunting as you will not be able to get these strange anthems out of your head and soul.

Jonah Matranga "And" (Limekiln POB 4064 Phimadelphia PA 19118) Ma-trite-ga.

Nathalie Matthews (Cougar Entertainment Group, nathaliematthews.com) Independently released slick R&B is rarely on par with radio hits, and while this could use hookier production, it sure sounds better than some of ther stuff out there. Matthews sings with panache and a clear, strong voice, and has some sly phrasing, and she can sing in French. What more do you want?

Matt Pond PA "Last Light" (Altitude 7 W. 22- St. 4Fl NY, NY 10010) A shallow pond.

RD Mauzy "Honeycut" (Big Spoon) Spare, bare, and better than Cher, these striking little songs reveal a man with musical genius status stamped all over him. Ranging from chilling to Dr. Demento-ish, this collection is perhaps the Mauziest thing I've heard this century!

Mayday Parade "a lesson in romantics" (Fearless 13772 Goldenwest St. #545 Westminster CA 92683) Pop punk that should blow the kids away and mildly amuse the old codgers. Well, I'm young, so I dig it!

May or May Not "Bike" (twothumbsdown.com) May or May Not be the best band ever, and I'm leaning mayways!

Danny McDonald "Fibrotones" (Off The Hip POB 1211 Carlton Vic 3053, Australia) I'm told McDonald is a power-pop icon in Oz, and I believe it, as these post-Garage pop gems sent me over the rainbow!

Maria McKee "Late December" (Cooking Vinyl pob 246 Huntington NY 11743) Save the drama for some other mama.

Erin McKeown "Sing You Sinners" (Nettwerk 8730 Wilshire Blvd ste 304 BH CA 90211) I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings, but this young lady does not seem to sing jazzy standards well enough to merit this CD's release. Still, this is relatively pleasant

Meathaus (Alternative Comics) This comix anthology proves that comix are kinda funny. Standouts: Mickey Duzyj, Farel Dairymple, and P. Williams.

Me First and the Gimme Gimmes "Love Their Country" (Fat) At first this seems like it will be obnoxious – pop punksters doing by-the-numbers pop versions of country classics with tongue in cheek --- who needs it? But the trick here is that some country material is so strong that it do-see-does the sass right out of these kids. During Dolly Parton's "Jolene" the power of the song, and the way the chord changes are perfect for pop punk, and the weight of the words, make the genderfuck of the cover version (the dude is now asking Jolene to not take his man) seem more poignant and powerful than goofy. I could have used more old time Opry and less Dixie Chicks (and the Eagles shouldn't count), but the highlights make this lasoo worth spinning.

Dave Mehling "How Do I Make You Lonesome?" (BR) Mehling is smelling...like a melodic rose!

Menzingers "A Lesson in the Abuse of Infromation Technology" (Go Kart) These men are short on musical zingers.

"Messthetics #101," "Messthetics #102," "Messthetics #103" (Hyped to Death POBox 351 Westminster MA 01473) These collections of British 45s and cassettes from 1978-1981 are *so* much better then *Killed By Death*, mainly because they focus on weirdo acts that transcend punk and make weirdly challenging, but somehow almost always poppy and magnetic, music. Even the most lo-fi, oddball act (MLR) or the most novelty-esque should be-drivel (a dude singing about his love of marmalade, an anti-British Airways tune) are sublime and awesome. And even if the CDs were blank, the reproductions of record covers and extensive liner notes are enough to merit purchases (Scissor Fits claim to have taken their name from a Don Martin comic sound effect; one band reworked a Television Personalties song to replace Souxsie and the Banshees with Holly and the Italians). I jones for the next release.

Metaform (myspace.com/meta4m) Soulful underground hip hop that doesn't try to impress bored backpackers, instead going for grooves that even the most mainstream heads can't help get into their heads. Meta-killer!

Augie Meyers & The Rocka Baca's "My Freeholies Ain't Free Anymore" (El Sendero Records-P.O. Box 34404, San Antonio, Texas, 78265) Did you ever notice, in the midst of the car stereo speaker wars, that the Brown Brothers generally play better stuff than the Black Brothers? I took a survey on radio stations, and I damn near floored the interviewer when I told her the only station I generally listened to in the car (this was when I had a girlfriend to drive me around. Ohhh, I was livin' large) was the Mexican station, because, it's generally the only music of any honesty you can still listen to just about anytime on the radio, if you run out of tapes or CDs. Augie Meyers has been making Gringo-friendly Tex-Mex and Conjunto styled Rock 'n' Roll since the declining days of the Second Reign of Sir Douglas and His Court of Noble Knights (Late 60s). If you've been diggin' the Mexican sounds you hear in passing, but, get dizzy listening to another language, this is the ticket. Augie is well remembered today for his contributions to The Texas Tornados, like the classic Conjunto stomp, "Hey, Baby (Que Paso?)." This new CD carries on in the same tradition. The title track smacks of the same good humor and two-step beats, not to mention Meyer's fluent accordion runs. He only summons the power of the mighty Vox Continental organ here and there, but, the squeeze-box provides all the party you'll need, here. Raw, down to earth, but, make no mistake, well thought-out music abounds, here, be it on the Country flavored "Heart of Mine" or a heartfelt cover version of Butch Hancock's "(I Keep) Wishing For You," which The Sir Douglas Quintet recorded at the dawning of their Third Dynasty. Augie really pulls out all the stops on the celebrated cheezy Tex-Mex organ on "Hey La Ronda," which, dare I say it?, is about a MOVER! So's this album. Pick up on it, but, you might just want to stock up on Mexican food makings and clear a spot for dancing. Even if you're the only one there! Note : Augie performed with the surviving Texas Tornados, and Sam The Sham at South By Southwest in Austin, recently. Field reports have been, not surprisingly, very positive.

Ken Michaels "the last of its kind" (Zomo, zomomusic.com) A true songwriter tells truths...even truths about fish! This album sounds like everything is played on the most exquisite toy instruments ever made.

Middian "age eternal" (Metal Blade) Heavy doomcore metal that made me want to vanquish demons!

Midnight Bombers "Evil Streets" (Wondertaker.com) Rockacide bombers!

The Mirage "Tomorrow Never Knows" (RPM) Of course a zillion 60s groups (including every Motown act) covered the Beatles because those were the freaking Beatles, but this band genuinely seemed to be covering them with ht eknowledge that they can hang. These demos and rarities circa '66-68 (only one of ehich is an actual Lenno/McCartney, the rest are originals that csound confident in their Beatles-isms that goes beyond the shamelessness of power pop Beatles-lifts) is a gem for 60s pop-psyche fans will delight in. With extensive liner notes and great photos this CD is a fantastic argument for this band you never heard of.

Mirah and Spectratone International "Share this Place" (K, Box 7154 Olympia WA 98507) The best entomology-core, ethnic-instrument-y pop (?) album of 2007. If you like accordions and insects you'll bug out when you hear this masterpiece!

Miss 45 (No Talent) Should be called Hit 45, because there's no misses here!

Miss Fairchild "ooh La La Sha Sha" (Jive Sucka) Nerd funk that made me want to nerd breakdance or program an avatar to do so. Genuinely joyful. Prince impersonations are bold and always appreciated.

The Mission UK "God is a Bullet" (SPV) Mission Unaccomplished!

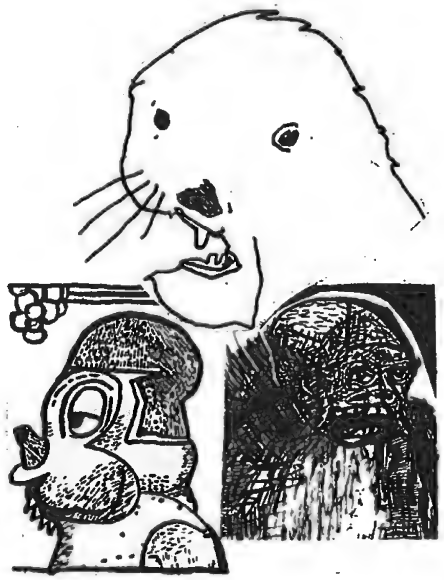
MixIcan "Shades of Brown (S.O.B.)" (mixican.com) This righteous, conscious, post-modern world music collection has traditional Ethnic music either reconstituted to become a support track for high-minded hip hop, tweaked to become almost acid-dance music, or pretty much left alone to be ballady and beautiful. Not sure how these diverse tactics fit together, but I like 'em all.

The Mobile Mob "Freak Show" (Locomotive) The Mob rules!

The Mojomatics "Songs for Faraway Lovers" (Alien Snatch) One of the best blues/garage/punk bands working, these cats make the raw sound elegant and cause extreme shaking in parts of my body I like to shake.

Monkey Power Trio "House of the Mechanical Sun" (PSMR POB 980301 Ypsilanti MI 48198) This band's annual 7" EP is expanded to 12" vinyl (lotsa songs, but still a 45), and they did it not simply by making impressionistic, raw, idiosyncratic rock, but by adhering to a policy included in the between-song banter here – *"Everything's a song."*

Monks "Demo tapes 1965" (Play Loud/Munster) Though these recordings have been released before, if you haven't heard these rough, far-less-intense versions of the songs that would end up on perhaps the greatest rock album ever recorded, you owe it to yourself to get this. While one of the (not surprising) revelations of these demos is that the profound expertise of the German sound engineers have a lot to do with the jarring magic of "Black Monk Time," these toned down versions reveal the playfulness and genuine strangeness of the compositions better than the finished versions. And, bottom line, there's not much monks stuff to get, you might as well get it all.



Monotract "Trueno Oscuro" (Load, loadrecords.com) Despite being some of the grooviest music Load has ever released, this still has the raw sonic oomph to make you feel all of your tracts.

The Monsters "The Worst of Garage Punk Volume 1" (Voodoo Rhythm) The right reverend Beat-man presents some of the best worst music ever made, as these Swiss cheeseballs have perfected trash rock to the point where you wish a genie would grant them 3 wishes. and they would make Europop, emo, and hip hop disappear, leaving messy monster music to rule the charts.

Morningbell "Through the Belly of the Sea" (Orange) Rather than describe the details of this high concept album with it's amazing audio adventures and impressive musical (and sound effect) textures, let me just say YOU ARE GENIUSES...WE SUBMIT TO YOUR GREATNESS. Seriously, I'm not being ironic.

Morning Recordings "The Welcome Kinetic" (Loose Thread) I would skip my morning pee to listen to this masterpiece!

Mother and the Addicts "Science Fiction Illustrated" (Chemical Underground) If you were casting a punky, but not punk, menacing English rock band for your movie this is what they would HAVe to sound like!

The Mother's Mouth by Dash Shaw (Alternative Comics) This groundbreaking comic is bold, confusing, and creepy, as it alternates between being cryptic and ultra-accessible. It is also full of weird love, though not bad love. Except for the suffocation therapy.

Motorpsycho sickle zine Just because I don't ride a motorcycle doesn't mean I can't love this zine - I can't fly a jet yet I still read *Jet*!

Mott the Hoople Under Review DVD (Sexy Intellectual) I would like to say that this is one of the more outstanding entries in this budget music documentary series because Mott's music, their weird history of gaining and losing a small but rabid fan base, and the unique character of their sunglass-disguised frontman make them one of the most fascinating bands in rock history. But to be honest, what makes this awesome is that it is one of the few entries in this series that has a genuine heavyweight weighing in with opinion, as a lead singer of the Clash just happens to be a longtime, major Mott supporter, and best of all, he is reduced here to a fawning, humble fanboy. If you aren't convinced by the recordings (and the documentary makes a pretty good argument for "you had to be there' at the live concerts) this touching display of loyalty will push you over the edge.

Mountain "Masters of War" (Big Rack) This is really and truly a new record by Mountain – the real Mountain – doing all Dylan covers. And it's good. The problem is that for something like this to get me excited it would have to be really great, and it's not. "Mr. Tambourine Man" comes closest to being genuinely exciting and vital and important, but for the most part this is just a strong, sincere, powerful, but ultimately non-crucial album. Leslie West's voice has less range than Dylan's, which (again) isn't a terrible thing, but hearing him sing for an hour would require something a little more compelling than this.

Mrsavi Pas "Elektronsks Musika Za Decu" (Listen Loudest) robots rape!

Mt.St.Helens "Of Others" (Two Thumbs Down, twothumbsdownrecords.com) This CD is so gloriously rich, powerful, and scoogly that I wanted to Mt. it!

Mummies of the Insane (Slutfish 327 Bedford Ave #A2 Brooklyn NY 11211) I know I'm supposed to hear this as a monster rock band, but to me it sounds like Ralph Kramden's Stooges cover band. I mean that as an extreme compliment! (Though not as big a compliment as a comparison to Barney Fife's Velvet Underground cover band).

Murder Mystery "are you ready for the heartache cause here it comes" (murdermysterymusic.com) Pleasantly creepy pop that makes my stereo get away with murder!

MXPX "Let It Happen" (Tooth and Nail 3522 W Gov't Way Seattle WA98199) On the one hand, you kind of want to say, come on Tooth and Nail how many times can you milk the MXPX material, and does anyone even care anyomore? But on the other hand, if youdo care, this is a pretty deluxe package, with great photos in the booklet, tons of videos on the DVD, and generous helpings of new tracks, demos and alternate versions.

My Fat Irish Ass! zine ($2, POB 65391 WDC 20035) Gets fatter and assier every year! Proudly the last outlet making dirty comics out of Family Circus, and you gotta admire that conviction!

My First Time – a collection of first punk show stories edited by Chris Duncan (AK Press, akpress.org) While the title of the book invokes cherry poppin' teen sex, it might have been better to invoke a born again analogy. Because this compilation of essayts about going to your first punk show is best when writers relate how their lives genuinely changed forever because a new world opened for them when they entered their first pit. When I first picked up the book I read a few weaker pieces (not the all time best edited book, from spelling errors to letting a few subpar essays in), but after reading everything I really dig the book. Hardly anyone is straight up bragging for punk cred (except for, predictably, Michael Azerrad, who boasts of seeing a Dead Boys set at CBGBs where John Belushi sat in on drums). Infact, Steven Sciscenti admits that he was bored by the Ramones when he saw them in '76. I also dig how there's no poseur-phobia – writers aren't embarrassed to cite a late 80s first show. And I also dig how many folks remember aborted first shows, where their folks or the doorman or their ride made sure it didn't happen.

Mystechs "Escape From Planet Love" (Mega Point) Reinventing themselves with radical lineup changes and a new genre of musical mischief every year or so, the Mystechs are Chicago's must satisfyingly confounding band. "Escape" is an electro sex fest that's surprisingly wholesome. It sort of feels like the Little Rascals or Judy and Mickey get some computers and keyboards and decide to put on a show! A dirty one! And "Hot Tub" is a satanic metal record that makes Hell sound more fun than a Friar's Club Roast!

My Teenage Stride "ears like golden bats" (becalmedreocrds.com) Sounds like The Smiths if Morrissey was secretly getting some.

Nadeea "Jealousy" (nadeea.com) Seeing how hot Nadeea is being presented as, and judging from the artwork, one would not be surprised if this was just some kind of generic Eurodisco with breathy generic sex kittewn vocals. But Nadeea proves herself to be a unique presence, with vocals that balance sexy and shrill in a way that makes her seem almost avante garde. She's Russian and I'm rushin' to see what she does next!

Narcolepsy Press review zine (POB 17131 Anaheim CA 92817-7131) Raw, ragged reviews by a zine trenches veteran!

The Narrows "Benjamin" (Wantage, wantageusa.com) Bludgeoningly awesome!

The Neins Circa "sleeves and wings" (Copperspine Records) This music will actually make you happy.

"Neo Wave Nastros" comp CD (The Modernist, themodernist.com) A nice compilation of Japanese bands made me feel less guilty about a driving a Honda (sorry bruce Springteen!). The Climax may be the lowpoint – they might as well be from Southern California. NanoX makes super fast punk that borders on surf (surfing the neo wave I suppose). Joystax makes ominous futuristic music that fantasizes about being evil and British. Ex-Boy is the best of the bunch, drawing on dramatic Euro rock of the 80s, including some Adam and the Ants elements, and producing three songs that would have been my favorite single of the eyar if it were a single.

The New Flesh "Vessel" (Heartbreakbeat 50 W. 29 St. apt. 10e NYC 10001) Should be called the Rended Flesh because that's what this savage audio assault did to my ear meat!

New Loud "Me (secrets) You" (I Heard You Wanna Fight Me Records) Four impressive post-electro dance blasts that made my feet hurt from hoofing so much.

New Years Day (TVT) Is this actually a band trying to sound like Veruca Salt? I hope this works out for them, but it seems like an odd plan.

New York Dolls "One Day It Will Please Us To Remember Even This" (Roadrunner 902 Broadway, New York, NY, 10010) Some of you might remember when there were "Summer Songs" and "Summer Albums," toons that provided a soundtrack for your hot fun in the summertime, when the weather is high...Well, this should have been a summer album when it came out. It works as one. Does it work as the third New York Dolls album? I'd say yes, if you weren't expecting retreads from the Mercury LPs....You have to remember, when we left David and Syl (now the only surviving original members) back in '75-'76, they were on the verge of almost single-handedly creating the New York version of Power Pop. Think about it. Blondie was already in the running, but a more streamlined New York Dolls lineup had already debuted Pop Rocks like "Girls," "Teenage News," "Funky But Chic," and even, I have Syl's confirmation on this, "Frenchette." The proposed third New York Dolls album would have undoubtedly been more commercially viable than the first two LPs, but also more of a potential letdown to the loyal few that actually bought them. It's extremely unlikely that the Johansen/Sylvain-led Dolls would have broken into the mainstream market at the time, simply because Rock was dying on the vine as a singles-based commodity, and their newer material was better suited for their subsequent solo releases, which, for all their Pop hooks, remained largely the property of the underground, anyway. Flash forward some thirty years, and much has changed. The New York Dolls now stand tall beside The Velvet Undergound as a good name to drop if you're a rock band that's already made it, but worried about your street cred. Bands like Poison, Motley Crue, and, later, Guns 'n' Roses, would have some folks believing they were The Dolls reborn. Uhhh, O.K.... At least Blackie Lawless did fill in for an on-the-lam Johnny Thunders once, and play in Arthur Kane's band, but he milked this association for far more than it was worth. Meanwhile, back in the states...Hanoi Rocks, one of the only bands to bring the spirit of the Dolls' music into 80s Rock, found they couldn't get arrested on their one U.S. tour, though their drummer, Razzle, would get sent home in a box (shades of The Dolls' first drummer, Billy Murcia, who turned up dead on their first trip to Europe). At any rate, the remaining members of The New York Dolls (with former Hanoi Rocks bassist, Sam Yaffa, in tow) did the impossible, reformed and reestablished themselves on the international scene, while making it all make sense, musically. The album's opener, "We're All in Love," contains more than a dab of orange sunshine, not unlike the similarly titled "We Love You" by The Rolling Stones, though Johansen blasts though the beat happy Psychedelia with a voice that's a bit raspier, but still winning bets against a Panzer Tank in the Las Vegas casinos. The lyrics speak of David and Syl's admittedly rocky relationship in past years, and the surprising upward turn their friendship has taken since putting the band back together. It's a love thing, baby. "Runnin' Around" contains some strong harmony vocals, admittedly not the original band's greatest strength (but one of many gimmicks Aerosmith grabbed from The Dolls' cookie jar) and strong guitar riffs. Syl Sylvain, much the underrated lead guitarist, and Steve Conte (a lesser known veteran of the New York scene. I even saw him in an old *Rock Scene* magazine, once) play off each other remarkably well, and, I have to say, Conte and new drummer, Brian Delaney, are really coming into their own. Their last two Chicago area appearances (the latter in a New Orleans-themed restaurant and sports bar in a suburb most of my friends had never heard of, and the former a "Soundstage" taping that's only just airing, now. I was there, and it was like being at *Don Kirschner's Rock Concert!)* have borne this out. "Dance Like a Monkey," a catchy mutant spawn of "Mickey's Monkey" and "Stranded in The Jungle" (go figure), was the proposed hit single. Didn't happen. Not because it wouldn't have sounded great on the radio, nor that it wasn't fun seeing them perform it on late night TV, but, Rock 'n' Roll that you can dance to doesn't even score points in the clubs, much less on the airwaves. Other radio-unfriendly (that's a compliment) rockers include "Gimme Luv and Turn Off The Light," which sounds like what you'd get if you took the 45s, "I'm Cryin'" by The Animals and "Mystic Eyes" by Them, and melted them together in a frying pan. The album's closer, "Seventeen" is a Punk Blooze worthy of The Stooges (who also have a new album out. People merely ignored The Dolls' new one, this one's getting slaughtered!) "Rainbow Store" reads like a latter day Shangri-La's number, but the lyrics are HAPPY! Besides all that, there's guest appearances by Iggy, Michael Stipe (aren't people tired of that voice, YET?), and even Bo Diddley, who once asked the musical question, "Has anybody got some DOPE for these boys?!," when The Dolls requested "Pills" at one of his gigs. There's also (still?) a cool DVD on the making of the CD, Though The New New York Dolls came to rock, there's no getting around David's many poignant ballads (which sometimes remind me of Johnny's 1980s tracks...No pun intended), just like there's no getting around the fact that some people think this is a David Johansen solo project. David might still be the Queen Bitch onstage, but this is also a BAND, and, even if they were originally thrown together like a Reality TV show, minus the suckey music, they are the sum total of their parts. Stronger, meaner, and more full-bodied when they were initially created in that laboratory. "And, now, his shoes are too big, and, now, his jacket's too small. Well, I'll show you who are the Frankensteins... The Frankensteins are us all."

Night Cobras "Terrors" (Big Neck) Terrorfic!

Ninetynine "Worlds of Space Worlds of Population Worlds of Robots" (Stomp/Stickfigure) NinetyFINE!

Danbert Nobacon "The Library Book of the World" (Bloodshot) Nobacool! The Chumbawumber gets all balladerrish with help of the Bloodshot house band. Presumed (by me) political radical sloganeering that I can't follow at all is my favorite kind!

Nobody Can Eat 50 Eggs comix by Steve Steiner (445 1/5 Randolph St. Meadville, PA 16335) Actually comical humor comix, which are apparently being pumped out at a pace comparable to *Richie Rich* comics in the 70s (I was sent a bushel of issues, all great, and all xeroxed with color covers). One nice thing is Steiner doesn't seem to have the exact punk rock background of every other underground cartoonist, but is never too square to be seriously funny. As to whether anybody can read 50 issues of *Nobody Can Eat 50 Eggs*, wait a week and I'll tell you.

No-Fi Soul Rebellion "Terrible Muscles" (The Glad Sound, nosoulrebellion.com) Clever, esoteric, no-frills, alternative dance punk should always be a slam dunk, right? I guess not, because I just didn't like this. At all.

NOFX "They've Actually Gotten Worse Live" (Fat) This is worth having mostly because NOFX is so tight (in a sloppy way) that this live album really functions as a greatest hits/most interesting songs collection, and it's good to hear all of these together (especially because it includes their recent political stuff mixed with old dumb stuff). Plus includes great stage banter like, "We're fucked tonight," "If you do believe in God you're wrong," "I'm talking to Fozzie Bear over there...wakka wakka wakka" and "you've got to sing harmony on, 'anal-lyyy."

The Nomads "Night Time" b/w "Boss Hoss" (Munster) Should be called the YESmads!

Not A Photograph – The Mission of Burma Story DVD (MVD) I could be the millionth writer to point out that MOB's comeback tours and new recordings mark the most artistically successful old time punk/alternative band reunion ever. But instead I've decided to simply note what this excellent, no-frills, documentary reveals as the formula for band to make an awesome comeback. Everyone in the band should stay thin, no one I the band can go bald, and no one can try to dress cool. I guess it also helps if you are really good at music.

Nothing People "Twinkie Defense" ep (S-S Records) Something Else!

Nothington (BYO) Nothingspecial. Though this dude deserves the rock Oscar for gravelly-est vocals!

Nova Feedback art zine by Michael J. Bowman (gallerymjb.com) The doodles of a genius/madman/some combo of the both.

Novi Split "pink in the sink" (Hush, hushrecords.com) Novi HITS! If this doesn't get your emotions emoting you need to get an emotionectomy.

NRBQ & the Whole Wheat Horns "Derbytown Live 1982" (MVD) Nothing spectacular videowise here, just a well shot concert (featuring lots of nice footage of the edges of a thoroughly satisfied crowd). But how can you not dig an NRBQ concert? When the piano and drumskins start getting pummeled it's like you are getting beat up with joy!

Numb by Joshua Kemble (335 E. 9 St. apt. #4 Long Beach, CA 90813) Writing about writing sucks. But drawing comics about writing is sublime. Devastatingly aesthetic, this makes me glad that the Teenage Turtles revival will likely fund another 100 years of Xeric grants.

Of The Opera "Study Natural Law" (Lucid 665 Timber Hill Rd Deerfield IL 60015) This moody, dark electronics/post punk guitar music actually scared me

Oceans 13 soundtrack (Warner Brothers) As soundtracky sounding a soundtrack as you'll hear in a while. This Frankensteins together the best sounds of Space Age Bachelor Pad/detective music/spaghetti-ish Westernisms, etc., to create something Hef could spin in his Sixties penthouse or you could deejay with at your hipster bar.

Octopus "Restless Night – The Complete Pop-Psyche Sessions 1967-71" (Rev-Ola) More Monkees than Love, the psychedelic hard sell of this collection's subtitle may put this fine lost early 70s British classic in the wrong hands - I would sooner slap a sticker on this declaring it "Proto-Glam" rather than attach a baggage tag reading "Pop-Psyche" Also, please note: Octopus is a fucking *awesome* band name.

Of God and Science (Detach) Lush, bordering on mush, but ending up as good as "Tush." Though this doesn't sound like ZZ Top. Though the awesome track "Emef" manages to be boogie infused without actually utilizing any boogie rhythms.

The Orchard Thieves (orchardthieves.com) The vocals are too whiny sounding for me to appreciate the majesty of this thing

Otasco "Hubris" (Apocalypse the Apocalypse 5274 Glenburnie Dr Baton Rouge LA 70808) Awfulasco

Outing Riley DVD (Wolfe) Sure this is gay movie, but it's also the most Chicago indie film you'll ever see. The bad part of that is that painfully unfunny Chicago-style storefront theater one man play dialogue frames the story. The good part is that no Chicagoan can watch this without digging the details, like the Empire Carpet jingle or the Steve Dahl (as a lawyer!) cameo. Overall this is a pretty entertaining if you can stomach corny stuff that interprets gay cinema as being both buddy movie dick flick / family emotions chick flick. But check out Buckingham Fountain!

Outrageous Cherry (Scratch 726 Richards St. Vancouver BC V6B 3A4 Canada) If you had asked me about Outrageous Cherry I woulda told you they were a Detroit band that for the last decade or so had been taking the Detroit hard rock/garage template and flavoring it with pop hooks and great vibes, and a joy for music that makes their shows infectiously awesome. But I woulda been wrong, because apparently they've been around for closer to 15 years, as this is a reissue of a 1994 album I'd never heard or heard of. And it's great, with production that is overall as solid as their later work, but said production coyly apes lo-fi primitivism as times, as the occasional psychedic drone, the constant Dollrods/Moe Tucker backbeat, and echoey vocal effects (sometimes on the lead, almost always on backups) make this CD a surprise treat that even non-Cherry fans will dig.

Ovipositor "Pirate Flag at Half Mast" (arbeit macht dinge) If you like your music weird like the Fall or rough like late 80s postpunk or smart like indie bands that went to college a lot then you're Ovi-positively going to dig this.

"Oxblood - First Blood" compilation (oxbloodrecords.com) Kansas City apparently has some great, and at times gloriously fucked up music, according to this comp. While there's some (expected) Heartland rootsy Americana on here, there's also weird dance music, punk, and garage, as this comp has excellent tracks from some of our faves inclusing Ssion, Olympic Size and White Whale.

Pacific UV (WARM pob 1423 Athens GA 30603) Pacific-arific! Majestically moving!

The Pack A.D. "Tintype" (Mint) This Two Man Band (in which both men are women) plays the kind of blues garage rock that two man bands do so well, but without ever going apeshit or all Clapton. This keeps it moody and smoky, with the vocalist always sorta sounding like Ozzy on "War Pigs" when he does that "Oh lord yeah!"

Palefighter "Swan Dive Bomb" (bigduckmanagement.com) Should be called Paleruler because THIS RULES!

Paper Airplanes "boyhood" (54 40 or Fight) Paper is fragile, yet very important.

The Paper Cranes (Unfamiliar , areyoufamiliar.com) Pop-tastic pop music that made my happy button pop.

The Passive Aggressives "Reloaded" (Dead Fish) The Massive Regurgitives.

Joshua Path "Headlight in the Sun" (Vanalden) A Path I'll avoid

Patience Please "fleeting frequencies" (HHBTM POB 742 Athens, GA 30603) Patiently pleases!

The Patsys "Both Sides Never" **Patsys/Magic City** split single (Umbrella, thepatsys.com) If your garage was as good as the Patsy's garage you would park your car in the house and move in. They are crazy ridiculous good, maybe the most underrated garage band in the universe. Which puts Magic City in an awkward position, as I seem to have strained my praise muscles, already, but they rock well as well.

Paulson "all at once" (Doghouse doghouserecords.com) Maybe too clever.

Pax "10,000 Words" (Locomotive) Pox.

PCN TOURS: Martin Guitars DVD (PCN 401 Fallowfield Road Camp Hill, PA 17011) Remember those awesome segments on Mister Rogers' Neighborhood where they would visit a factory and see how interesting things were manufactured? Well imagine that five minute segment expanded to two hours and you've got this detailed tour of the Martin Guitar factory. This is apparently from a series that

highlights interesting things around Pennsylvania, and considering the opening montage included women inspecting spinach and a tank doing donuts I'll venture that this is not mostly a music-themed program, but guitar fans, amateur letheirs, and wood aficionados will appreciate this lengthy tour. Not as compelling as Mister Rogers' tours in that the assembly line workers never speak, this is saved by an intro by the great great great grandson (or something like that) of the original Martin, and he's a natural soryteller, who relates the ancient origins of Martin Guitar and shows off some historic axes. The guy giving the long tour is some kind of artist liason (which may explain why he is a little too excited to namecheck Mark Knopfler) and other than an obsession with wood prices, he does a great job showing the meticulous craftwork that goes into an acoustic guitar. Did you know that around 1900 was the golden age of the ukulele?

Peachfuzz "Catch Your Snap" (Teenacide pob 291121 LA, CA 90029) Near perfect powerpop with an edge of punk and garage that made me forget all the other peach acts for 49 minutes or so.

Pearlene "For Western Violence and Brief Sensuality" (High and Dangerous Records 3420 Middleton Ave #25 Cincinatti OH 45220) Fantastic collection of dreamy/nightmarish Southern rock full of soul, drugs, and simultaneous reverence and disregard for the giants whose shoulders they stand upon.

P.G. Six "Slightly Sorry" (Drag City) Slightly snoozy.

Philpot "Hate Writes Better Than Love" (Universal) Puts the "class" in "Classic Rock Reproductionsim."

Pi "The Curse of the Songwriter" (thatcrazychick.com) Absolutely delicious Pi, and I usually don't eat things that sing with this much 70s singer-songwriter inflection, but for some reason this was tastier than rhubarb a la mode.

Pike "...From Someone So Small" (Smile We Hate You) Like!

Pink Floyd: Meddle – A Classic Album Under Review DVD (Sexy Intellectual) More of a survey of early Floyd than a focused look at an album, this is a great companion to the all the recent Syd stuff that is floating out there, as it really demonstrates what the band had to do after Mr. B's transition from functioning rocker/human. While the documentary too often has to rely on printing interview quotes from Floyd members rather than finding interview footage, I still think this is one of the more solid entries in this series, providing interesting analysis to a work that begs to be analyzed.

Pink Reason "Throw It Away" ep (Criminal IQ) I honestly spent 12 minutes playing this at 33 then 45 and it sounded wrong both ways. Either this was somehow mastered at 39 RPM is this is genuinely weird music.

The Pit That Became A Tower "The Pineapple Fields" (Men of Israel) Wicked indie-sounding Israeli acousto-rock that made me think the word "yearn" for a long time.

Pizzeria Kamikaze comic by Etgar Keret & Asaf Hanuka (Alternative Comics 644 NE 9th Ave Gainesville FL 32601-4440) A remarkable comic by Israeli fiction all-star Keret about a mundane afterlife solely occupied by suicides. Perhaps the most impressive aspect of this must-read comic is the way mundanity is rendered in such a way as to be absolutely captivating. This story is almost the opposite of magical realism, as it turns a spiritually otherworldy scenario utterly normal. Hanuka, who is an elegant craftsman, renders these characters in a line that is equally adept at relating inexpressiveness and (rare in this case) warmth.

The Placebo Man by Tomer Hanuka (Alternative Comics) Whoa, a bunch of comics where you actually learn about people who have feelings! Hanuka's fantastic story anthology contains, amongst other gems, the best Tarzan comic ever.

Plain White T's "Stop" (Fearless) This reissue is apparently remastered with a few bonus tracks, but it's basically the same as it ever was: a solid outing for some sincere local kids who I wouldn't have expected to ever stand out from the pack, but who nonetheless did and now hopefully will make modest to decent money for a long time. I always genuinely liked these guys, and you can hear on this album why they connect with the young folks. This guy *means it!*

Plane "I see love the future" (Blue Room) Plane and simple – this is awesome! Lotsa Chicago bands are affecting Euro-accents lately...I guess you can't sound suave if you talk like Ed Vrdolyak.

Plastiscines "LP1" (Caroline) People might tell you that Parisian ladies this beautiful couldn't actually make good garage pop punk, and they might be right, because this is not one of the 50 best new poppy garage bands I've heard this year. But they are some seriously fine looking women, so I'll remember the band's name a lot longer than 43 of their betters.

Carl Platou "Frozen Eve" (carlplatou.com) Spooky guitar meets mournfully cool vox in a neighborhood so cinematic that all the lightpoles have guys in tilted fedoras and trenchcoats leaning on them, awash in dramatic shadows.

Please Don't Feed The Bears! (A Vegan Cookbook) by Abjorn Intonsus (Microcosm) There's that uncomfortable line somewhere North of a Foods Not Bombs demonstration where scene-centric punk rockers are a hackeysack game away from hippiedom, and I think a Vegan cook book straddles that line. But hell, I'll cook from it – this has everything from bouillabaisse to bubble tea!

Podington Bear (myspace.com/podingtonbear) Precious electro pop that makes you want to hug one of those robot dogs.

The Poison Arrows "Straight Into the Drift" (File13) Futuristic dreariness that uses synthesizers the way Abu Ghraib interrogators used dogs and waterboards. Yet I love it!

Robert Pollard "Normal Happiness" (Merge POB 1235 Chapel Hill NC 27514) You will love a minimum of 4 of these 16 songs, and like a minimum of 9. Thus Pollard keeps his rock batting average in Wade Boggs territory.

Poobah "Steamroller" (Monster P.O. Box 460173 San Antonio TX 78246-0173) Guitar psyche meets bar rock and like where they meet. Count on Ohio for always having one more legendary local band you never heard of and feel dumb for for said deficiency. Poo-tastic!

Iggy Pop "Live In San Fran 1981" (MVD) This is a CD of the soundtrack to a DVD that used to be a Target Video VHS, and that said, it sounds pretty great. Iggy was relatively powerful then and this band, while not imitating the Stooges, was pretty bonecrushing when they wanted to be. Fans likely have the video already, but the bonus rarities here are two silly rock songs Iggy recorded with Ric Ocasek. If I was a firefighter I would pump "Fire Engine" whenever we raced to a blaze. Of course, if I was a firefighter I might not have heard enough records to know how goofy and unoriginal this is. Which would be a good thing.

Pop Punk's Not Dead compilation (Go Kart POB 20 Prince At. Station NYC 10012) An arguable premise made somewhat convincing by the Queers, Squirt Guns, Bamix, and the always amusing, often confusing, never soothing Boris the Sprinkler.

Portico "Shape to form" (Hinge) Porticoma.

Potop "Session 1" (Slusaj) Pobottom : (

Duffy Power "Vampers and Champers" (RPM) One of the joys of RPM releases is being convinced that someone you never heard of is incredibly important. These 60s-era blues rockers demonstrate that in addition to possessing the best and/or worst name in the history of blues rock, Power also was a nuanced, impressive performer, who never reduced his source material to minstrel-show fodder or skifflish absurdity. And he does "God Bless the Child" straight. Impressive.

Power of 6 comic by Jon Lewis (Alternative Comics) Better than all the X-Men movies. In fact, Lewis should write the next X-Men movie.

Preserving Efforts Vol.01 DVD (MVD) This compilation of underground hip hop videos features Guru, Atmosphere, Canada's hilarious Wordburgler and a bunch of white European rappers who actually are more in touch with the humor of early hip hop then with the dullness of most modern underground/backpack stuff.

The Pretty Things "40th Anniversary-Live in Brighton" (Snapper Music, www.snappermusic.com) There's not much that needs to be said about this remarkable (and remarkably low-priced) CD/DVD package, except that, if you fancy yourself even a casual fan of one of Britain's finest, or, if you're already with the program, you need to own this. The "Classic" '66 lineup returns to have another go at the entire Pretties' catalogue in this intimate 2004 performance. Opener, "Roadrunner" kicks (and I DO mean "Kicks") things off, with the band sounding as strong as ever, with Phil May's vocals still positively feral (not to mention, of course, that he still has far more hair than the voluntarily bald Alt-Rock hipsters who go about, blissfully unaware of underground forefathers such as he), as he shouts, "DON'T BRING ME DOWN, MOTHERFUCKER!!!," leading the band into a still-punk as fuck rendition of said number...Of course, more "Sophisticated" numbers, like the early 70s favorite, "Havana Bound," which benefits from the strong harmony vocals of messrs. Wally Waller, Jon Povey and Frank Holland (actually, everybody sings, here), and the underrated twilight of Psych-dawn of Heavy Metal classic, "Cries From The Midnight Circus," show off the diversity still projected by the 21st Century Pretties. In fact, there really aren't that many Blues staples, here, one exception being "Hoochie Coochie Man." Now, before you groan, get a load of this action: The Pretty Things, already a force to be reckoned with on their own, are joined by none other than Arthur Brown, who no longer needs a flaming headpiece, as he bursts into flames every time he sings, or, should I say, singes... Brown and Phil May toast each other in their own, inimitable, styles, taking the familiar Blues standard to new heights of braggadocio, Phil with his most blueswailin' leather-lunged White Devil self, complemented by Arthur, breaking glass and the sound barrier like an evil Tom Jones. You'll swear you've never heard this song before. This rendition may give you nightmares, but, they'll no doubt be the sexy kind. Of course, the band also plays some outstanding selections from "S.F. Sorrow", the legendary Psychedelic Rock Opera, in which feared and revered lead guitarist, Dick Taylor (who's a friend to us all, make no mistake), puts in a fine lead vocal on "Baron Saturday." Taylor puts in a fiery performance throughout, on a Vox Phantom, no less. The group are at the peak of their powers, musically and vocally, on "S.F. Sorrow is Born" and "Balloon Burning," and, if that's not enough to make you wanna blow your mind, there's plenty of protopunk chestnuts like "Come See Me," "Rosalyn," and "£.S.D." (which, of course, means "Pounds, Shillings, Pence" and nothing more....You DO believe me, don't you?), culminating in a rave-up runthrough of "Route 66," sung by drummer, Skip Allan, that always brings the house down (even tho' some idiots protested "Why are they doing this Pub Rock shit?" when The U.S. was blessed with a Pretty Things tour a few years back). WHEW! All this, and more, plus a CD with the audio portion of the same entire show.

Priestess "Hello Master" (RCA) Huge rock-history rock, but not epic enough.

Primordial Undermind "loss of affect" (Strange Attractors Audio House POB 13007 Portland OR 97213-0007) Not only went under my mind, but also inside out of my mind and around in a mindy-swirl and beyond my mind, if you dig me. Heavy...

Prize Country "Lottery of Recognition" (Exigent POB 24 Kaysville UT 84037) Deserves the booby prize. I think they call this hardcore, but they are wrong.

Lou Profa "Nove kreacije" (slusaj najglasnije!) The Croatian Zappa!

Project: Alf DVD (VSC) This made for TV feature film finds lovable puppetronic alien Alf, sans his TV family, at the center of a Roswell/*X-Files*/*I Love Lucy* type government conspiracy/heist/coverup. Not the funniest film of all time, but Alf was one of the best actors of the 80s and he's always pretty good for a few guffaws. So confuse your Netflix envelope stuffer and order this one up.

Prong "Power of the Damager" (13th Planet/Megaforce) America gives anyone a second chance, but not third chances. I'm pretty sure this awful band already had a comeback attempt.

The Proton Energy Pills "Rocket to Tarrawanna" (Bang! POB 166 Santurzi 48980 Bizkaia/Basque Country Spain) If you're asking me to be nostalgic for a 90s Australian rock band I never heard of, good luck. But if you play me a CD that sounds like AC/DC's cousins rocking to high heaven with no didgeridoo's in earshot, you bet your gourd I'm on board!

Prurient "pleasureground" (Load POB 35 Providence RI 02901) Tastefully apocalyptic noise carnage.

Psyopus "Our Puzzling Encounters Considered" (Metal Blade) Psucks.

PT & the Dopes "The First + Road to Slatina" (Slusaj) Post-Everything!

The Pubes "Peat Sounds" (Roadhouse Tunes 9102 Edwards Dr. St. Louis MO 63132) Infusing pop punk with menace, danger and scariness, this band is better than your band and this CD (with stellar art by Jerome Gaynor) is a modern masterpiece that will change the face of music. One song challenges Rod Stewart's songwriting ability, and has a twist surprise ending.

Puffy AmiYumi "Hi Hi" (Cherry Red) The British version of the cartoon soundtrack/compilation has all the fun tracks and best-of jazz as the American version plus a coupla cute extras, but not worth buying as an import. However, if you are reading this in England, don't buy the Americans import, get this, you'll love it!

Pure Country Gold (Empty POB 12301 Portland OR 97212) Sometimes music is so rollicking good and rocks and swings so dynamically on the fringe of discombobulation that you just have to alternately shout "GOD*DAMN!*" and YEE*HAW!*

Queen *DVD Collector's Box*, ***Under Review 1946-1991: The Freddie Mercury Story*** DVD (Chrome Dreams) The most curious thing about the two DVD collector box set is that instead of packaging the very good two part *Queen Under Review* DVDs they packaged the excellent *QUR* pt. 1 and a DVD called *Queen: Magic Moments*. Maybe it's not a terrible choice, as the former gives a discography breakdown/rock critic survey of the band from its inception til 1980 (the rockinest years), and the latter shifts gears and just has former friends and associates reminisce. Mind you, they rarely have anything revealing or particularly interesting to say (Freddie was embarrassed by his teeth, he cranked opera records really loud), but they are a nice alternative to the creepy music reviewer obsessiveness that is the delightful signature of the *Under Review* series. Another release that seems to ignore the prior two *Under Review* DVDs is the Freddie Mercury tribute, which retreads a lot of the same ground, but leaves out any Brian May appreciations. What is best about this are the commentary by Freddie tribute artists, posing in front of their costumes. What is most disappointing is that this DVD does not include their performances (though the footage of fake Freddie teeth insertion is as good as any performance). Oddest moment of this DVD: they recycle footage from a prior *Under Review* release, but for some reason can't find a good copy of it and it looks all messed up, like a dub of a dub of a dub.

Que Suerte commix (Apdo 18280 28080 Madrid) Comix with bite, and that's the tooth!

Racoon "another day" (An Other Label, raccoon.nl) 'Coons? When Racoons try to get on our back porch, Momma just chase 'em off with a broom.

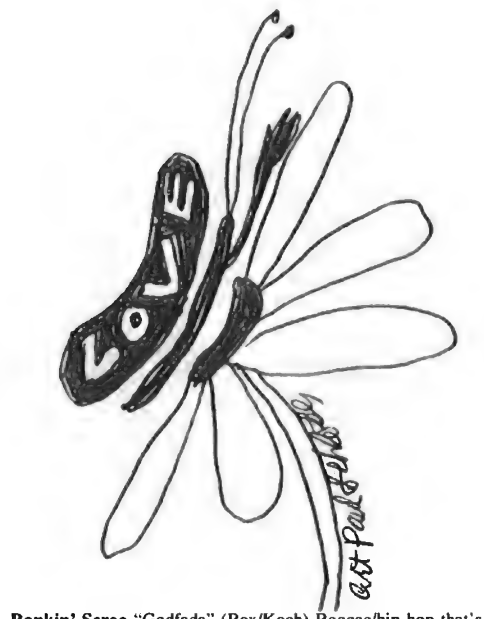
Rafter "Music For Total Chickens (Asthmatic Kitty POB 1282 Lander WY 82520) Can't...review...keep...dozing...off...zzzzzzzzz.

Raftree (POB 1431 Union NJ 07083) Righteous Rock like this doesn't grow on trees...unless it's a Raf-tree!

Blake Rainey and his Demons "The Dangerous Summer" (Two Sheds POB 5455 Atlanta GA 31107) Should be called Blake Brainy, because he is a musical GENIUS! Haunting, simple acoustic songs with fantastic lyrics are a good thing.

Randall of Nazareth (Drag City) There's such a thing as *too* acoustic.

Random Touch "Alchemy" (Roadnoise pob 1683 Crystal Lake IL 60039) These ethereal, weird-ereal, extraterrestrial compositions were obviously made by geniuses for geniuses, so to my dumb ears this is like a dog whistle I can't even hear. Comes with a DVD my dumb eyes can't see.



Rankin' Scroo "Godfada" (Rex/Koch) Reggae/hip hop that's too slow to be dancehall and too fast to be"screwed" (as opposed to scroo-ed). Dread-ful.

Raspberries "Live on Sunset Strip" (Ryko) When I caught this tour I expected to enter a half empty House of Blues as the (what I thought was) bizarrely prohibitive pricing made it clear that only the most dedicated record collector goons would make it out for this odd reunion. My bad. With all the praise and adulation from the horn-rimmed set I forgot that Eric Carmen was hot! As the club bulged with swooning former teenyboppers, as well as the Midwestern pop-addict masses, I realized that this was not just a band cranking out magic in the studio, these dudes really had "it," and if you don't believe me, check out this CD/DVD at the L.A. HoB. I think the Chicago show was better, by the way.

The Ratchets "Glory Bound" (Pirates Press 819 30th Ave. SF, CA 94121) Ratchious!

The Rats "Rats First Long Play Record" (RPM) Throwing a few nuggets of boogie into a 94% pure T-Rex genuflection, this 1974 platter, the sole LP by these rodents, needed to be reissued just to massage the colons of the all the Would-be Bolans. Far from a masterpiece, but genuinely genuine glam is by definition always pretty swell.

Rat Wakes Red "Energy Garage" (Rat Disk 393 West End Ave 15 E NY, NY 10024) I would have gone through virtually every other word in the dictionary and every proper noun in Encyclopedia Britanica before using either "energy" or "garage" to describe this.

Jon Rauhouse's Steel Guitar Attack featuring Tommy Connell (Bloodshot) Steel guitars don't attack, they invite and revel and share! This CD is a steel shell of joy bursting forth with resonating happiness (and some bongos and a vibraphone thrown in here and there). You need this Rau in your house!

Razorcake magazine (POB 42129 ,LA, CA 90042) What a great gimmick - a magazine with good stuff to read!

Ray's Vast Basement "Starvation Under Orange Trees" (Howell's Transmitter 2839 24th St/ SF, CA 94110) If challenging, enchanting art-folk-jazz Steinbeck-themed mood music was a genre, these would be the Beatles of said genre.

Rebel Pride "Backin' It Up," "It Is What It Is" (POB 1226 Largo FL 33779) Exactly what you would expect from the band name – Dixie-fried Southern Rock that borders on parody but is too earnest to not dig.

Rebuilding the Rights of Statues "Cut Off!" (Tag Team 115 North Kenmore Ave suite 3 LA CA 90004) Confusingly good. Or not good, I'm confused.

Recent Photo "The Monster Within" (recentphotomusic.com) Recently declared GENIUSES!

Red Eye, Black Eye by K. Thor Jensen (Alternative Comics) K. Thor is one of our favorites around here and in his first graphic novel he boldly allows us to dislike him a little. This travelogue has Jensen, in the wake of getting fired, dumped, evicted, and jarred by the September 11th attacks, becoming an Internet-driven Kerouac, taking a literary hobo route around the country, crashing with semi-strangers he's contacted via e-mail. As he couch surfs and drinks and chills and calls his mom he reveals himself to possess the kind of arrogance and sense of entitlement that make him far less than fully sympathetic. However, his expressive, spare, inky linework, his ability to listen (as he travels he gathers stories from his hosts that he presents as vignettes), and his ultimate disappointments (he felt he was entitled to the enlightenment and epiphanies other On The Road writers seem to enjoy and gets bummed when he realizes they ain't coming) add up to make this a brisk, compelling, satisfying read. And it's compact enough to bring on your own hobo journey!

Red Pony Clock "God Made Dirt" (HHBTM) Sorta sour sounding.

RED RED RED "Mind Destroyer" (Big Neck POB 8144 Reston VA 20165) My ears BLED BLED BLED. Best record I've heard in a long stretch.

Casey Reid "Cephalclog" (bigmuddyrecords.org) The beauty of the swamp sonically revealed!

Kurt Reifler (Red Glare Records) Should be called Kurt Rockfler, because he *rocks*!

Rennick "611-07-0681" (myspace.com/rennickmusic) Not the catchiest album title, but a pretty damn seductive album. Especially if smooth semi-goth vampire makeout music turns you on!

The Resonars "Nonetheless blue" (Get Hip) Should be called the Resorectors cause this pflowery psyche guitar gem made me wanna buy all their rec(t)or(d)s!

Retconned "Unhappenings" (Stickfigure POB 55462 Atlanta GA 30308) Stripped down synth punk that is either the stupidest or brilliantest musical endeavor of the 21st Century.

Reverend Beat-Man "Surreal Folk Blues Gospel Trash Vol. 1" (Voodoo Rhythm) This masked slice of bluespunk Swiss cheeze is so holey he should be elevated to Pope Beat-Man!

The Revisions "Revised Observation" (Dirtnap) To sound as tough and good as the Clash on an acoustic guitar you have to strum the fuck out of it! And to sound badass with a voice that quite frankly sounds kinda Haircut 100-ish is even more impressive!

The Revolving Paint Dream "Flowers in the Sky" (Rev-Ola) If this was not on one of the most credible reissue labels on earth I would consider it a fraud. This excellent early-80s psychedelia collection avoids retro-grooves while still being far more connected to the original psyche spirit than the Paisley underground/shoegaze music that it was supposedly contemporaneous with. It is framed by liner notes telling the tale of a Creation Records band so obscure, mysterious, and enigmatic, that even trying to track down background info led to denials of their existence and cease and desist orders, not to mention a handful of tidbits involving recording sessions ending with all instruments being destroyed and mysterious master tapes arriving many moons later. Well, fake or real this is a pretty great synthesis of 60s and 80s sounds, and it is a lost classic, no matter what the real deal is.

Revisions "Revised Observations" (dirtnap, dirtnaprecs.com) Should be called the Revelations because this record made me see Jebus!

Del Rey and the Sun Kings "Battleship Potemkin" (Trakwerk?, it's written in Cyrillic, I can't quite tell) If you watch this soundtrack score along with the classic film it's a moving, frightening, powerful experience (this is some seriously claustrophobic, water-logged masterpiece music). But if you get high and listen to it along with *Wizard of Oz* it will blow your fucking mind!

Lou Rhodes "Beloved One" (Cooking Vinyl POB 246 Huntington NY 11746) All Rhodes lead to patchouli strumming.

Walt Ribeiro (no label) *?*

Keith Richards Under Review DVD (MVD) This opens in a manner very similar to the previous Stones title in this series, with historians, ex-Stones (OK, just Dick Taylor, but he's cool enough to count as multiple people) and superfans supplementing awesome archival footage with praisesongs. But this gets real interesting when the story is supposed to get boring. As the Stones lose footing in the 80s (and 90s and 00s and on) according to his worshipers Keith proves over and over that he is the coolest, best, most talented, realest rock god ever, leaving his bandmates in the Stone-quarry. If you don't worship the craggly riffster after watching this you weren't listening. Or you hate Christgau.

The Riff Randells "Doublecross" (Dirtnap 2615 SE Clinton St. Portland Or 97202) These trash rocking ladies have P.J. Souls!

Righteous Jams "Business As Usual" (Abacus) Extreme metallic music with a secret boogie Rock center.

Ian Rilen & the Love Addicts "Passion Boots and Bruises" (Bang!) Dusty, gritty Australian cowboy-in-a-bar (fighting, loving and brooding) music.

Robots and Empire "Omnovore" (Trip Machine Laboratories POB 317 Nyack NY 10960) I don't understand how rock this massive would not have crushed a town like Poughkeepsie into a fine powder!

Robson Arms – The Complete First Season (VSC) Though I was tempted to write a treatise on the properties of Canadian comedy, in part motivated by the superiority of the sleazy superintendent that is part of the framing device of this anthology-style Canuck sitcom to Schneider of *One Day at a Time*, I think instead I will simply praise this show on its own merits. If ever a box set was made to watch in one long sitting it is this show which travels from room to room in an apartment building telling comic/tragic/goofy/bizarre tales of assholes, lovers, kids, immigrants, old folks, queers, and karaoke champs. The poignancy of the tale of a would be classical musician contrasts, and compliments the absurdity of a Tom and Jerry like conflict between a cuckold and the Uber-Schneider. The sophistication involved in showing the melancholy loneliness of a non-bitchiness-challenged woman who fakes her own cancer sits nicely against genuine stoner sex comedy. Super highly recommended

Rockfour "Memories of This Never Happened" (Anova/Cooking Vinyl) Rocked four of my brain lobes!

Rockin' Bones 4CD set (Rhino, c/o Warner Music Group Company, 3400 W.Olive Ave., Burbank, California 91505-4614, www.rhino.com) Well, I waited until I could find this highly rated set affordably (USED!), and, I'm glad I did, though it's arguably worth the sticker price. Rockabilly, simply put, is the purest form of white Rock 'n' Roll. I don't mean White Supremacist music, as it's been sometimes, wrongly, suggested. On the contrary, guys like Elvis, dressing Black and absorbing Black culture as he did, was wearing the segregationist-era 50s equivalent of a "Please Kill Me" T-Shirt when he left himself out in the open in his killer cat clothes, designed by Jews, The legendary Lansky Bros., no less. Rockabilly was dangerous, sexy and wild. You'll notice I said, "Was." With a few exceptions, most bands today are more concerned about their hair, clothes, and tattoos than the music itself. If you find a band that IS the exception to the rule, hold on to that band with all your might. This Four CD set attempts to draw the connection between Rockabilly and punk, and, while it's true that Rockabilly was the original punk rock, I would have included numbers like, "I Want Some Of That" by Kai Rai, "Yeah! Yeah! Come Another Day" by Tony Casanova, "The Hoochie Coochie" by Tommy Martin and The XLs, "There Was a Fungus Among Us" by Hugh Barrett and The Victors, and one of the wildest rockers ever, "Hot Lips Baby" by Herbie Duncan, to bear out this point. No matter, this comp puts the obvious stuff (Elvis, Jerry Lee, Johnny Cash, Carl Perkins, etc) together with far more elusive material, much of which I'd never even heard, and, unless you don't get out much, I'll wager that you haven't, either. Fr'instance, did you know that Jackie DeShannon (Lookin' RED HAWT in her "Bad Girl" threads in the accompanying book) recorded a version of Elvis Presley's "Trouble" that's too sexy for the TOWN, never mind the room! Speaking of sex, did you know that the unbelievably erotic "Little Girl" by a John and Jackie (Jackie providing the remarkably real-sounding simulated [???] orgasms) MAY have featured John Maus/Walker of The Walker Bros.? "Black Cadillac" by Joyce Green, is a true celebration of murder! Joyce sends her boyfriend off in true "Your funeral, my party!" fashion. It's the placement of songs, here, that really makes it happen. Of course, Buck Owens and George Jones' early Rockabilly sides, back to back, make perfect sense, but, "Whole Lotta Shakin'" sounds like anything but an oldie when preceded by the red hot Rockabilly of "One Hand Loose" by Charlie Feathers and "Bang Bang" by Janis Martin (also too sexy for the town...I'm just sayin'!). Ronnie Dawson appears here, under three names, and, while Johnny Dollar's version of "Action Packed" is GOOD, it can't touch Ronnie's better-known version, in my humble estimation. It's cool that they included a couple of early British rockers, Johnny Kidd and The Pirates' original "Shakin' All Over" and Vince Taylor and The Playboys ' original "Brand New Cadillac," but, what of Johnny's "Please Don't Touch" or Vince's "Move Over, Tiger," or Cliff Richard's groundbreaking "Move It" (yes, Cliff rocked. If you're too cool to recognize that, I'm fresh out of sympathy, or Tommy Steele's "Rock With The Cavemen," or...the Father of British Punk, Screaming Lord Sutch?! Anyway, this comp contains everything from Johnny Burnette (plus, brother Dorsey's super-killer "Bertha Lou"), Big Al Downing, Art Adams, Hasil Adkins, The Phantom, Kip Tyler, Barbara Pittman, Gene Summers, The Collins Kids, Jack Scott, and a gazillion others, plus a lavish booklet, featuring plenty of rare photos, plus commentaries on each track by Colin Escott and a short essay on Rockabilly guitar by the Eager Beaver Boy, himself, Deke Dickerson. The box itself looks like a real 50s paperback (with actual pockmarks and frayed edges that, I guess, somebody did at the factory!), illustrated with great care and taste by Steve Vance (who also did the great artwork for Rhino's "Loud, Fast, and Out of Control" box set). When Rhino sets out to do a package like this, I have to admit, they do it RIGHT. Jaded aficionados

and green kids alike will find plenty to like about this set. Even if you have a lot of this stuff, chances are you don't have it with such great sound! And you probably didn't know that there was a 50s J.D. film called "Nekkid Youth," but, you will, when you hear the original ad, contained here (along with "Hot Rod Gang," starring Gene Vincent, "I Was a Teenage Werewolf" and others).

Rock N Roll Purgatory zine POB 279258 San Antonio, TX 78227) Their one man band issue has so much respect for one man band-ism that I now wish to reside forever in R&R purgland!

Rock Relief Live in Concert DVD (VSC) This is a 2005 Hurricane Relief Concert in Florida starring some pretty ragged looking, age-ravaged rockers, who nonetheless give it the best that can be expected at a theme park. When Dee Snider is the best looking dude in attendance you are in trouble! Loverboy, Rick Derringer, Eddie Money, Michael Bolton and Mark Farner's receding mullet are not who I want helping me if I get in trouble, but I'm sure displaced people weren't complaining (unless they were relocated to Michael Bolton's rehearsal studio). Highlight is Dee Snider putting down Ratt (who weren't there) for not having original members.

Rock You Sinners – The Dawn of British Rock & Roll (Rev-Ola) This is a must have comp of mid-50s British would-be Rock n Roll, meaning lots of orchestras, novelty stuff, and kooky covers. What you're buying this for is Peter Sellers comedy rock singles from'55 and '56. But the Tommy Steele tunes – with apocalypse and prehistoric themes included – are the gems, sounding like the oddball tracks from obscuro 50s comps that make the pages of the Norton catalogue so special. A solid 31 tracks of genuine lunacy from some Redcoats trying to figure out how to get on top of another revolution (and only a few years shy of conquering right back).

Rogue Thief "The history of Things to Come" (namenooneman.com) Fearlessly dramatic rock that will thieve your heart!

Rolling Stones Under Review 1967-1969 DVD (Sexy Intellectual) By focusing on such a short, intense time in the band's history (the end of the 60s, the end of Brian Jones, Altamont) you not only get Baby Boomer critics jabbering about subjects that are actually interesting, but you also cover a period where the Stones were shooting documentary after documentary and concert film after concert film, so there's plenty of good footage to draw from.

Rot Shit "The Worst Kids Ever!!!" (Big Neck) The Best Shit Ever!!! Well, definitely some pretty good shit.

RSJ "Gain to Nothing" (Hangman's Joke) Really Scary Juggernauts of extreme music evilsplosiveness!

RTX "Western Exterminator" (Drag City) Sounds like Grand Funk! Well, not exactly, but this is definitely by far the Grand Funk-est record in the Drag City catalogue!

Bobby Rush "Live at Ground Zero Blues Club" DVD (MVD) With the passing of Johnny Taylor and Tyrone Davis Rush is the last of the giants of the grown-and-sexy juke joint masters (my apologies to Latimore, you are just shy of being of giant), and this raunchy performance video re-establishes exactly why that is so. No hip hop video director ever showcased booty dancers with this much joy, no late night Malaco compilation TV commercial ever captured the soul of the 21st century chitlin' circuit the way this well-shot video does, and even from the front row you would never appreciate Bobby's leer (not to mention his hair) as much as you will on this disc.

Sacred Cowboys "Cold Harvest" (Bang! Posta Kutxa 166 Santurtzi 48980 Basque Country/Spain) Sour Cowpads.

Sah "06/06" (Phraty POB 14267 Cincy Ohio 45250) Sah-k it to me! Post-post rock that actually rocks it's way to being the soundtrack to the best apocalyptic cowboy movie ever.

Salmon "Rock Formations" (Bang!) Kim Slamon is a rock spawning fish triumphantly swimming upstream! Here he leads a guitar army into some incredible battles that explore every aspect of go-totally-fucking-apeshit over-the-top gukitar RAWKing. Axes are taken to Iraq, outer space, Scotland, the Delta, and wherever Yes comes from.

The Saps "C'mon Already – Start a Fire" (3612 N. Janssen Chicago IL 60613) This Sap will stick! Pop goes the joyfulness!

Sarandon "the completist's library"(HHBTM) Sarandelicious!

The Satelliters "Where DO We GO?"(Dionysus) Though we will never forgive them for taking off their masks, these Satelliters continue to be out of this world, Demonstrating once again that they do 60s garage rock as good as anyone since the 1960s and probably as good as anyone will do til the 2060s.

Dudley Saunders "the emergency lane" (Fang POB 652 NYC 10009) There's not a dud on Dudley's singer/songwriter tour de force!

Micky Saunders/Dan Susnara "Fishbowl World Getaway," **Dan Susnara/Mickey Saunders** "2007," **Dan Susnara** "Bicuspids" (Mumble Mumble Music) Underappreciated genius is a bittersweet tragedy! I love hearing these late-Beatles-inspired troubadours do their thing, and I wish more of you got to hear them.

Tom Savell "You Just Gotta Love It" (Still Fumin') Maybe *you* gotta love it, but don't put that on me. This guy is cornier than an Iowa farm field.

Scene of Action (Pop Smear) Better scene then heard.

Art Paul Schlosser – The Tribute (cdbaby.com/cd/artpaul) Art Paul is one of the Midwest's most noted outsider musicians, and apparently, thanks to Dr. Demento, the internet, and songs about purple bananas and peanut butter, the world loves him too! Cover songs by Chicagoland's very own Aaron Ackerson, Dr. Demento stalwart Whimsical Will, and the great Digibot are highlights.

John Schooley "One Man Against the World" (Voodoo Rhythm) No One Man Band (other than King Louie when he's not too far gone, which he is a bit too often) can take the fundamental rawness, simplicity and energy of traditional, blues-based OMB-ity and make it rich, delightful, and real without seeming like a cliché-monger or minstrel. Schooley schools me!

Schooner "Hold on Too Tight" (54 40 or Fight) Snoozer. Not an insult, actually, this impressively sounds like musical snoring.

SCID "Fucked Beyond Recognition" (Undergrind POB 1869 Powell TN 37849) Left Scid-marks on my brain. So brutal this extreme band should just be labled as BRTL as they are too out of control and fast for fucking vowels!

Screamin' Mee-Mees "Plastic Hong Kong Door Bell Finger" (Gulcher) The most timeless extraterrestrial hillbilly music ever barely-recorded

The Sea and the Cake "Everybody" (Thrill Jockey) This is the closest to tasting like delicious sweet cake this band has ever gotten. Happy times guaranteed within this discs plastic laser scribblings!

Sea Food "Paper Crown King" (Cooking Vinyl POB 246 Huntington NY 11743) Delightfully creepy sounding witch music. I know that since it's a dude singing it should be warlock music, but this ain't no warlock music, this is straight up witch music. Spellbinding!

Seediq Bale "ChthoniC" (Downport 1510 Eddy Street Suite #805 San Francisco CA 94115) Taiwanese symphonic darkwave protest Metal. Or, as I like to call it, MANNA FROM THE GODS!

The Seeds "Jumping Through The Mirrors" DVD (???) Bootleggish, yet somehow official-looking, this DVD features decent quality copies of all the Seeds footage you've ever seen or heard of, from Dick Clark shows to their sit-com appearance to the scenes from Hollywood movies that used Seeds tracks as background music. And of course a few utterly irrationally confusing Sky Saxon interviews. Spread your Seeds, Sky!

Self Evident (DPG POB 3690 Mpls MN 55403) Maed me want to self-asphyxiate...and not in the good way!

The Selmanaires "The Air Salesmen" (International Hits) I'd sell my hair for the Selmanaires! James Chance meets Joy Division! Well, maybe not that, in any way really, but pretty awesome.

Seminal Rats "The Essential – 1984-1991" (Bang!) Anyone who knows me knows that semen and vermin are just about my two favorite things, so imagine my surprise when this did not turn out to be my new (old) favorite band. Dumb rock is fine, but don't rock dumb.

Service Group "principals of electronic circuitry" (Squid vs Whale POB 11252 Portland OR 97211) Serviced me with some sweet pop action with twinges of strangeness. More florid than lurid, but still kind of swarthily creepy in a way I genuinely appreciate.

The Setting Sun (Bad Afro) Contagious 60s –style pop with vocals that almost sound like the Chipmunks trying to be in the Kinks. In other words, a MODERN MASTERPIECE!

7k. "knick knacks and apparel." (7khq.com) The best bar band you can expect to hear in your fave bar.

17 Pygmies "13 Blackbirds" (couldn't read the label or website – the lettering was too small and stylized) The precious-est pygmies ever! Contains a remix CD for no real reason, but I sorta liked it more than the renaissance fair soundtrack Disc 1.

Seventh Season "liquid Water" (Independent Records) Seasoned for nausea-inducement

The Shaky Hands (Holocene) Shaked me firm, if you know what I mean. Scruffy, groovy, jangly, poppy and scraggly, this is what some would aptly call "sweet!"

Richard D. Shank "a single step" (POBox 16037 Ashville NC 28816) He's like a sincere yearning Billy Joel! Shank you very much!

The Shanks "Cut Me" ep (Boomchick) Shankciously shanked me in the shankular vein. Shanktastic!

Shark Island "Gathering of the Faithful" (Manifest Music) Amongst bands you never expected to hear from again was this poppy glam metal act that released a pretty decent album around 1989/1990 just in time to have Nirvana pop up to ensure that there would be no follow up. Until now! Maybe you have to really have loyalty to your hair metal heroes to truly dig this, but I don't think you have to get back in that mindset completely as this is pretty awesome and youthful and fun. It's also bluesy and mature and a little reflective. I wanted to end with a joke by naming a more obscure late 80s metal act that should make a comeback, but I couldn't think of one.

Sharkula "The Diagnosis of Sharkula" (sharkula.com) Sharkula may not be the best rapper in Chicago, and I suppose some could make a convincing argument that he is the worst (he certainly has an unconventional, bizarre, stream of consciousness style that many can't get with), but I love him. Rap music should be absurd, and strange, and jarring, and when the never-say-die Artist Formally Known as Thingamajigee sells you a CDR for whatever you wanna pay him for it you never know what it's gonna sound like. One guy once told me he got one that was Sharkula sitting in a car rhyming along with the B96 pop radio station. I once got one that was single 8-minute track of hilarious word associations over an endless Doobie Brothers loop. This is a comparatively slick compilation album and it is as joyously ridiculous as his past works. Diagnosis: Goofy!

Sharp Things "a movable feast" (Bar None POB 1704 Hoboken NJ 07030) Between ten and two thousand musicians orchestrally popping in full genius mode. Lushly lovely.

Sh...Sh...Sh...Shark Attack (shshshsharkattack.com) The band actually musically stutters, and seems to mostly sing and play music by and for sharks. Thus this prog-surf band is actually the most aptly named combo of the century.

Short Punks in Love (myspace.com/briancremins) Moody indie with a nice balance of resonant guitar and spare percussion. Far less cutesy than the band name, but just as romantic (actually, moreso).

David Shultz and the Skyline "sinner's gold" (Triple Stamp POB 5753 RVA 23220) Much like another David, this roots-folkster has the prowess with modest rock to fell giants. But unlike that David he likely will not be attacked with spears by a jealous king afraid of usurption. Though I did see Bob Dylan buying spears last time he was in town.

Siberian "With Me" (Sonic Boom 2209 NW Market St. Seattle WA 98107) Si-Boring-an. Though they would be interesting if 98 bands hadn't come out in the last few years that sound just like them.

Sick of it All "Our Impact will be Felt" (Abacus) This is yet another official band sanctioned tribute album (isn't this kind of distasteful – I mean of course KISS did it, but Gene Simmons is crazy), and it has some pretty good stuff, especially because no matter how punk or metal the bands are (Napalm Death, Hatebreed, Pennywise and Kill Your Idols are among the acts) they all sound sort of like pussies compared to the original meathead pummeling songs. But seriously, I don't really know SOIA songs well enough to appreciate the covers, as I am a casual fan, so if you are a tangential fan, or a fan of the bands on the comp but not of SOIA you might not have much to hold onto here.

Silver Daggers "New High and Ord" (Load) Sour stomach seizure sounds.

Alina Simone "placelessness" (54 40 or Fight POB 1601 Aceme MI 49610) Second best Simone ever! With almost as chilling a voice.

The Sirens "More is More" (musick Recordings P.O. Box 1757, Burbank, California 91507 musickrecords.com www.myspace.com/detroitsirens) Those Detroit Devil-Dollies finally return with their Sophomore outing, and, while it's largely business as usual, you'll notice, real quick, there's been a major change on the front line. Where once there were four lovely ladies, now there's three lovely ladies and two guys. Now, personally, gender doesn't matter to me. I always thought Sirens' singer Muffy Kroha's Brother, Danny, made perfect sense (and perfect nonsense) co-fronting The Demolition Dollrods. I'll admit, when I got to The Sirens' one Chicago gig, to date, I had to wonder who this guy was, walking around in a studded leather codpiece and silver lame jacket. I found out, real quick, that it was their relatively new drummer, Malarsh. Joining him was the adorable Miss Lela, who played a mean bass, besides being quite easy on the eyes (hey, I didn't make ME!) in what I believe was her first official gig as a siren. Since then, second guitarist, Miggy Starcrunch, has also joined the fold, and, in the one band photo (only ONE?! CRIME!!), he's workin' that "Ron Asheton Africa Korps invasion of Las Vegas" look, know what I mean? The whole band, still "fronted" by original members Muffy and Melody Licious, look splendid in gold lame and black PVC stage gear, tho' the codpiece thing isn't doin' it for me, sorry, but, I'm SURE it's doin' it for someone else. The album starts with an ear-piercing shreik (always a good sign), and we're off and rolling (as if on broken glass) with "Hellraiser," a track from the original lineup's now-very rare French Sweet tribute EP (which appears here, in it's entirety). Well, if this doesn't put a stack-heel boot in your ass (but, it will), they're only getting started! The same standard of High Energy Rock 'n' Roll, steppin' in Bubble Gum in platform shoes, prevails with the anthemic "1-2-3-4 Rock 'n' Roll," also from a rare EP, by Girlschool (who're making a rare appearance in Chicago, and, I hope, your town, soon), though the song, purportedly, was first done by Brenda Lee. From there, it's the first cover version I've ever heard of "Go Back" by Crabby Appleton (The Waste Kings nearly covered it for a proposed K-Tel tribute, but I should be able to rattle off about 50 bands that've done it by now). While it lacks the conga battery and the acid guitar of the original, it more than makes up for it in balls, and/or estrogen. Nicely done. From there, we've got not one, but two MC5 party songs, "High School" and "Tonight," that almost make me want to be a teenager again. I said "almost." It goes without saying that Muffy could sing Evan Dando and Mark Arm off the face of the earth, too. Other highlights include the early 80s Slade roomwrecker, "Rock 'n' Roll Preacher" (and if you think Slade had spent their wad by the mid 70s, I feel sorry for you), Sweet's Protopunk/Neo-Bubblegum classic, "Wig Wam Bam," The Bay City Rollers' "Saturday Night" (don't ask me why, I really didn't like it much when it came out. I guess it was because the popular kids DID like it), the mood bringdowns "Right Now, Not Later " by The Shangri-Las (Mary Weiss's new stuff sounds great, BTW), and Bowie's "Rock 'n' Roll Suicide" done in a Marianne Faithfull/Marlene Dietrich Cabaret style, but, very emotional, not frigid...."Oh, No, Love, You're not alone!," closes the album, just as Bowie closed "Ziggy Stardust" with it....BUT, the party's not over! The secret bonus track, "Talk Dirty To Me" comes on like the breakthrough U.S. hit Hanoi Rocks never had. WHEW! The Siren scream of the hardly gorgonesque (tho' she's depicted as Medusa on the cover) Muffy puts plenty of male wailers to shame, laying it out, loud and proud, but, with dynamics befitting a trained singer (which she swore to me she isn't). To the Sirens, excess is best, and guitarists Melody and Miggy bear that point out, it don't mean a THANG if it ain't got that STANG. The tight but raucous rhythm section of Miss Lela and (Mr) Malarsh jet propel the whole mess to your living room with real panache and the same kind of sexual aggression (you know, the lovin' kind) the rest of the band conveys. If you've been acquiring a taste for "Junkstore Glam," but you're not too jaded to recognize the better-selling (in England) classic Glam Rock hits (there's a reason why Sweet, Slade, Suzi Quatro, Mud, and Gary Glitter's stuff sold better. It WAS better), and can see the (rather obvious) connection to Punk '66 and '77, THE SIRENS ARE CALLING!!! "In order to attain bad taste, one must first have truly great taste." John Waters. "The new Sirens album could make a young boy jump for joy and an old man adjust his trousers."-Pope Coleman, guest reviewer.

Six Organs of Admittance "Shelter from the Ash" (Drag City) This made my organ limp six times more than usual.

Skerlak Dead "Remannts UResolved" (Skerlak POB 20942 Phoenix AZ 85036-0942) Made me feel like I had to skerlak.

The Skies of America "Shine" (National Recorder 180 Main St. Radio City CA 96094) I hope this isn't insulting to the respective rockers, but this made me want to exercise. This CD is now my "Eye of the Tiger!"

Slaraffenland "Private Cinema" (Hometapes) Slafferlull.

Slow Poisoner "Roadside Alter" (Rocktopus) I'm not saying SP is not the best One Man Band in the world (OK, I am saying that, but he is excellent, making seriously spooky weirdo music), but I am declaring he is the Handsomest One Man band in the world.

Josh Small "Tall" (Suburban Home) Should be called Josh GIANT (to our ears he's a behemoth of humble folk pop).

Small Leaks Sink Ships "Until the World is Happy Wake Up You Sleepyhead Sun" (No Sleep 601 Park St. #58 Bordentown NJ 08505) I think you need to go to grad school to get this record.

small press review (POB 100 Paradise CA 95967) Relentless reviews of press that is small.

Smart Talk "Elect the Dead" (Reprise) Who would like this, I queried. Then the track called "Beethoven's Cunt" came on, and I realized Beavis and/or Butthead would *love* this. And I guess also at least one Warner brothers A&R guy.

Smoke or Fire "this Sinking Ship" (Fat) IF I smoked something that made me like this CD then I'd deserve to be fired.

The Smokes "ninesong456" (thesmokes.com) If any rock clubs ban these smokes they will have me to deal with as these slabs of stumblicious twang rock...well, they smoke!.

Dan Smolla "There's A River" (dansmolla.com) This singer songwriter should be called Dan Soul-a! ('cause he has soul, get it?)

Social Distortion "Greatest Hits" (Time Bomb) Everyone that would want these songs has these songs. The massive popularity of this OK band has always been inexplicable to me. Maybe I'm just still mad at them bailing in *Another State of Mind* on *Night Flight* a quarter century ago.

The Soft Targets "Whatever Happened to...," "We Hate You" (Backward Masking/Rooster Cow) As soft as steel and as convenient and economical as Target, this Chicago treasure better not keep getting buried by pirates...we need them. Albums include guitar playing, singing, bass thumping, and drumming; all of which are very good.

Solace Bros. "Bad Will" (California Beach Club Records, californiabeacclub.us) Absolutely spectacular album that defies genre. Rco kand garage fans will dig the big, often filthy, guitar sounds. Pop fans and anglophiles will dig Kinks-level craftsmanship. American Culures grad students will be delighted with a traditional yet edgily new take on "Frankie and Johnny." And post punk/modern rock/indie/whatever you want to call it fans will be surprised at how their genre can be utilized without the music turning dreary. Kicked my sol-ass, brother!

Sounds of Your Name by Nate Powell (Microcosm) I guess these are genius comix, but I don't really like them.

Space March "Without This You Can Never Change" (Death by Karaoke) One keyboard flair away from being John Hughes teen flick theme music, yet remarkably not hokey, retro or silly. March on down to the record store and make space on your CD shelf for this futuristic gem!

Sam Sparro "Black and Gold" (Modus Vivendi) Absolutely fantastic! Sparro's R&B-based electronic dance music draws, without irony, on black radio music of the 80s for vocal phrasing, grooves, and vibe. He never sounds like Prince, but he does sound like period Prince imitators, which ain't bad for 2007!

Spin "ep" (spinrocks.com) Look, if you name your band after a competing magazine, don't send us a copy for review, that's insulting. But seriously folks, this is pretty mediocre, occasionally catchy indie-esque pop. I wouldn't want this band to be named Roctober. Nor would they want that name.

The Spirit Girls "Forever Free..." (Trakwerx/End Is Here) We have a policy at this magazine that any band consisting of five people dressed in full costume as beautiful ghost women playing sorta-droning psychedelic art rock are guaranteed a five star review. So...FIVE STARS! Spooktacular.

Spoiler "Grease Fire in Hell's Kitchen" (SOS) Angry, impressive streetpunk sung with vocals that sound one song away from a throat surgery.

Bruce Springsteen Under Review 1978-1982 DVD (MVD) The Boss' worshipers (basically every American music critic ever) can very convincingly lionize the Jersey-ite, which makes this a pretty good documentary. The fact that they get enough good live footage (old stuff, plus Bruce's VH1 special) and actually play snippets of all the songs mentioned makes this rock solid. And they even have a thesis! Between Bruce's two rockin', super-iconic "Born" LP's he did he most important, most sensitive work. Cool.

The Spunks "Yellow Fever Blues" (Gearhead POB 2395 Davis CA 95617) I'm living on a Japanese Rock! Although any Johnny Thunders reference should be annotated by the data that the Spunks play 78 times faster than the Heartbreakers.

Squalora "repetitively futile" (Wantage, wantageusa.com) Post-apocalyptic extreme hardcore that made me fear everything. Squalawesome!

Stalkers "Yesterday Is No Tomorrow" (DRR, dollarrecord.com) Totally solid trash punk that will rattle you. While they would be my fave rave alive on a 45, on a full length one must note that there is a sameness to songs, but of course that never hurt the Ramones. Yet I'm compelled to mention that the vocal quality of the singer has a deadpan flatness that might be better suited to a few songs in a row and not a dozen...but I guess the Ramones had that too and it wasn't a problem. So forget I said anything.

Stanleylucasrevolution "Greatest Hits" (Stroboscopic) Synthsational!

Stanley Ross "Favorites" (stanleyross.com) Not sure who these glorious, get the Kinks out, Anglophiles are, but I bet they have the best record collections in America! If I write a good enough review, will you make me a mixtape? What's scariest about this is that I fear they may have snuck in my room and played me this CD in my sleep, because these all sound like longtime favorites!

Stare Into the Sun "Whispers Turn To Howls" (Reformer) This made all my parts bob!

State Bird "...presents Mostly Ghostly" (The Record Machine 4015 Charlotte 1South KC, MO 64110) If this is supposed to be some kind of ruralized strain of Freak Folk it fails, because it basically makes me think of *Hee Haw*. And I don't mean that in a bad way, I mean that this is rootsy American music that makes me feel very happy.

Sterling "Cursed" (File 13) These musical meanderings are Ster-LONG!

Stiff Donut "I Did It All For The Cookie" (36 Central Park Rd. Plainview NY 11803) Gloriously stupid!

Still Flyin "Za Cloud Ej" (Antenna Farm) School band gone so wrong it's right!

C.W. Stoneking "King Hokum" (Voodoo Rhythm) Obviously a time traveler from 85 or so years back, this Aussie pre-war bluester is going to fool a lot of old time blues deejays and please a lot of listeners with some fine compositions, nice performances and enough swinging brass to move your rent party ass.

John P. Strohm "Everyday Life" (Superphonicrecords.com) Rocks harder than Strom Thurmond eating a stromboli!

Strung Out "Blackhawks over Los Angeles" (Fat) Skate punk that's EXTREME...ly straightforward and solid.

Stunning Models on Display "what the night said" (Stunning Models on Display POB 274 Sapphire NC 28774) Intensely mellow.

Subhumans "New Dark Age Parade" (Alternative Tentacles) They still got it. Some of the best political lyrics I've heard, never abandoning simple, straightforward writing to express savagely point on dissent.

Submission "Transmission" (Listen Loudest) Submission accomplished!

Boris Sujdovic "Fuzz Machine" (Bang!) Caveman fuzz rock that drives like a Flintstones car!

Mark Sultan "The Sultanic Verses" (In The Red pob 50777 LA CA 90050) Lo-fi trash that is never lo-quality garbage. The guitar jangle-rattles, clichés abound, 60s pop/50s rock n roll/70s glam/powerpop/punk are fully embraced, but everything here somehow seems fresh, forward-thinking, and nearly perfect. Only an asshole would hate this record.

The Summer Wardrobe (Rainbow Quartz 163 Amsterdam Avenue POB 194 NY, NY 10023) Psychedelic with a touch of classic rock/bar band/southern rock working man roots, and some serious (maybe too much) respect for Wayne Coyne. A band for all seasons!

Sunkissed (Smalltown Supersound) A mixtape/history lesson about Norway's dance dance revolution with a little rock n roll (re)mixed in. Put this on at a party and Norway will be your way!

Sun Ra 'The Futuristic Sounds of..." (Cherry Red) The prettiest tunes of a pretty out of this world alien. The only Sun Ra recordings you can make love to and not end up in Dimension X.

Sunny Boys "This Is Real Singles/Live/Rare" (Shock) Apparently from 1980-1984 this Australian post-punk/retro-Kinksy band made at least 40 songs that were more than adequate, Wish I could be more enthused, but you definitely could do worse than picking up this retrospective...at least they liked good 60s music!

Superman's Girlfriend "Live, 1979" (no label) Dallas punk combo, Superman's Girlfriend, takes me back to a time when there wasn't a hell of a lot of difference between Punk and New Wave, it was all in FUN. This is a soundboard-quality recording of live show from Houston. S.G., to me, comes on something like a Texan Rezillos. Not to say they have the Rezillos' "Stop on a Dime" tightness, no disrespect intended, but a similar male/female vocal dynamic and infectious, cartoonish sense of humor. The group even had the cheek to cover their friends, and their OWN (previous) bands in their set. Besides Lo-Fi Punk classics by The Dot Vaeth Group (S.G. singer, Jim Nabors'- His real name-previous band, and Ft. Worth's first 70s Punks), they also get in the classic "Baby's

Playing Games" by The Vomit Pigs (and, at nearly 30 seconds in length, it may well be the longest recorded version in existence. I'm not kidding). Other goofy covers include "Baby, Let's Twist" by The Dictators (sort of a standard in Dallas. I saw The Devices, later, doing a pretty wretched audience sing-along a few years later), "Hanky Panky" (as "Ayatollah Does The Hanky Panky"...They'd probably crossed paths with Ft. Worth Oldies band, Vince Vance and The Valiants, who had a national hit around that time, with "Bomb Iran" (set to the tune of "Barbara Ann," wouldn't it be funny if a presidential candidate sang that today...), Iggy's "Funtime" and "Nightclubbing" from the "Jimmy and David On the Road to East Berlin" period (which Nabors was a BIG fan of...I once saw him doing a song from "Lust For Life," with the LP sleeve in front of his face, like a mask, reading the lyrics off the back!), and even a Texocentric (Even punks in Texas had a superiority complex) reading of "On Broadway" (the Dallas/Denton group, The Jetsons also did the song, briefly, when "All That Jazz" came out), not to mention the "B-I-Bickey-Bi-Bo Song" (sic) from The Three Stooges (and I don't mean Iggy and The Ashetons). That's not to say they didn't have songs of their own. Oh, they DID, though, alas, their magnum opus, "Lois, Lois" isn't included, here. The Super Power-Punk of "I Ain't No Asshole", one of the group's best moments, sets well beside "Dollin' Out, U.S.A. " ("Dolls" used to be slang for "Pills", if you're up on Jackie Susanne or Russ Meyer), "The Output Monster" (about the Porn industry, I take it...*I don't mean, I TAKE it!!!*), and "Jesus Saves." Guitarist, Paul Quig, gets into some phlanger action, but, it all works. This is an above-average document, from a time and place when being different was dangerous, but still something to be celebrated. A few years later, the local punks rarely made appearances in daylight....then they wondered why they weren't being accepted by society. For more info, go to www.nervebreakers.com, and click on "Erin's Texas Punk Junk" in the links section. You'll be glad you did.

Bert Susanka "Onward Chrisitian Slater" (Cornerstone R.A.S.) As a member of the Ziggens Susanka is a cult hero to many in the surf music scene, and considering the novelty element of that band's music, and the funny album title, I expected this to be a super weirdo goofy record, but it's not. It is an amazing exploration of surf music, with the diverse tunes ranging from traditional twangy guitar surf to traditional Hawaiian music to a long spoken-word Mexican wave-rider epic. Best of all, this doesn't sound like a crusty veteran of the music scene eking out one more release, it is a profoundly youthful record.

Suspected Terrorists (adept) This is profoundly punk, some of the most kickass music we've heard in a while.

Richard Swift "Dressed Up for the Letdown" (Secretly Canadian) Swiftly ascending upwards to genius mountain! Should be named Righteous Gift and the album should be called "Dressed Up for an Induction Ceremony into the Musical Genius Hall of Awesomeness!"

Swift Ships "Rebel Renaissance" (New Boy pob 2537 NY NY 10009) Can you believe there's such a thing as an indie rock/blues rock hybrid? And that it's good?

Swinging London – The Accidental Genius of Saga Records (RPM) This label sounds like it is populated by musicians and composers from the incidental scoring scene trying to pass off somewhat hacky mood music as groovy. But I guess anything that gets you in any kind of groove is kind of groovy, so this is far from the worst 60s comp.

Keith Sykes "let it roll"- (Fat Pete Records, www.fatpete.com www.keithsykes.com Fat Pete Records-PO Box 86, Mohnton, Pennsylvania 19540) This is admittedly laidback, occasionally bluesey, Honky Tonk Rock 'n' Roll. The opener, "Midnight in Tupelo," which is set to some tasty slide guitar action, makes spending a night in the box sound like Paradise (as long as there's frozen margaritas and Elvis on the radio). Songs like "Old Rock 'n' Roller" evokes Sean Tyla or his better known peer, Mark Knopfler, with an easy pace that belies more stinging slide guitar lines. Mellow to a degree, but with a built-in edge. The uncluttered nature of the production, here, makes Sykes' guitar work stand out without ever having to crank it up too high. Dylan's influence runs through many of these tunes, though, not to the extent that Sykes has to smoke four packs before entering the studio. The lyrics are decidedly straightforward, but, Zimmy sometimes appears to be standing over Keith's shoulder...I mean, how many people would rhyme "Zeiderze" with "Celebrity Jeopardy?" The most rockin' number in this set would be the hilarious "Tearing The House Down," but, by and large, this is a latenight album, much like Sal Valentino's recent CD, also on Fat Pete. Even if you lean more toward hard-edges Roots Rock stuff, this may very well grow on you.

Symphorce "Become Death" (Metal Blade) SymPhuck yeah!

"Tales from the Australian Underground Vol. 2 1977-1990" (Shock) Wow – we're seriously going all the way to 1990 on this? This double disc comp frontloads things a bit kicking off with a one two punch of Radio Birdman "New Race" and a Saints song. And if I was from Oz and knew all these bands I might not be impressed with this, as the bands I know (Hoodoo Gurus, Triffids, Scientists, and an OK Birthday Party cut – I can think of twenty better choices) were not my faves. But the now sounds of Tactics, Sekret Sekret, Severed Heads and Primitivie Calculators really got me good. Two hours that sound better than koala meat tastes!

Marvin Tate "Family Swim" (IVR) Tate's eclectic, powerful, challenging new CD is bolder than his groundshaking D-Settlement work, if only because he's not afraid to go ANYWHERE. Funk, poetry, rock, storytelling, Tom Waits-core, spirituals and gospel all get stellar treatment, with the latter two providing the most dynamic moments, only because I couldn't tell if Tate was embracing (what I assume is) the Christianity of his upbringing, or criticizing. He sure sounds sincere, but after all Tate's deconstruction and radicalism it's hard to take anything at face (or faith) value.

Teha Cedecius.XX (Listen Loudest!) This is music made by the haunted house haint that drank hot coffee right from the spout.

Temple of Brutality "Lethal Agenda" (Demolition) Not the heaviest extreme music offering, but a fine example of nasty musical marauding. Nice to see rock singing (and not cookie monster vocals) atop all the other brutal metal attributes.

Tena Novak (Listen Loudest) On a scale of one to ten this-a is-a a-a Tena!

Tenderhooks "Vidalia" (Rocksnob, rocksnobrecords.com) Vicious hooks! Twang and nasalisms applied to off-kilter southern pop in a concoction that creates serious combustion.

Ten West (Blue Label, bluelabelentertainment.com) So middle of the road that you would have to look under the white lines on the asphalt to find it. If the Curious George song by Jack Johnson is too radical for you this might be more your speed.

The Terminals "Forget About Never' (Dead Beat) This is pure trash garage that reminds me of when the Mummies and Supercharger came out and erased all the bad 80s Midnight and Voxx 60s revivals bands that got it wrong. This is a 33 rpm record of your favorite band played at 45.

Terra Diablo (Nocturnal, nocturnal-records.com) Terra-fic!

Terrible Twos "A+A" ep (Big Neck) Should be called the Tenable Twos because this punk trash band rocks so awesome their existence is justified in a fair or rational way and is able to be defended.

Test Pilot (myspace.com/testpilotldc) If you are in college and get high this is your favorite band, or should be.

That's My Daughter "Virgin Appeal" (www.thatsmydaughter.net) Pretty rockin' and pretty goddamn sexy, but maybe a wee too nineties-ish. But that's coming back!

They Might Be Giants "The Else" (Idlewild) "Here Come the 123s" (Disney) On their new (grown up) CD, big, meaty, slick production makes esoteric quirks sound like big, meaty, slick esoteric quirks. Longtime fans will appreciate the excursions to Messopotamia and parts unknown, but newbies will be pleasantly duped by the two opening tracks which are just straight up great rock n roll songs, novelty and neuro-firing be damned! As far as the "know where their bread is buttered" department goes, the Possible Behemoths return to kiddie music, taking it to the next level by taking their number songs/less educational Schoolhouse Rocks-ers directly to the Disney Channel. This might work out for them, as several other regular rockers turned kiddie rockers also appear on Disney's AM kiddie block (like Ralph Covert and Dan Zanes). However, while TMBG have easily vanquished all of their hipster parent-appealing contemporaries, they may meet their match coming up against the unhip acts they will now be bumping sippy cups with. I mean, dude, the Doodlebops are a freaking primary-colored skinned, magical, gay pixie rock band with a guitarist that combines Joe Strummer's and Peter Allen's stage moves...how can you hang with that?

The Thieves of Kailua (Mill Pond 555 N. El Camino Real ste. A #449) Island paradise music that doesn't sound like surf retreads (though you can hear the waves breaking), exotica (though they borrowed a few nature sounds) or Beach Boys (even if Mike Love is reclaimed from the hater rack as a vocal hero here). AloHEY!

This Is Me Smiling (Sony/Red Ink) This is me having no discernible expression on my face.

thomas lunch "diagrams without instructions" (thomaslunch.com) Sparks-arific!

Keith Thompson "Below the Line" (KeithThompsonSound.com) Classic country sung in a rich, deep voice that recalls the best Opry stars of the past and your favorite uncle from down South.

Through the Sparks "lazarus beach" (Skybucket 2783 BM Montgomery St. Briming ham AL 35209) Sparkless.

Thunderboss (Poptown POB 51 Lincolndale NY 10540) What would you call a fraction of the Dictators? I'd have opted for The Dics, but drummer Thunderbolt Patterson and Ross the Boss opted for this amalgam, and it's good they did, because this ain't the Dictators. This is straight up rock and straight up roll and you can tell a drummer wrote this, because the thuds and bangs are driving this thing! Not that Ross is any less awesome than usual, a guitar God even to atheists! You will dig.

The Thunderchiefs "Dig" (Wormtone 3837 King Street Denver CO 80211) Sure you can't surf in Texas, but the reason you can still make amazing surf music there is that you also can't snowboard, thus, no "extreme" leanings! This puts the Urph! In Surf!

Thunderhead Underground Falls by Joel Orff (Alternative Comics) I'm surprised to see this comic book– a warm, convincing, ponderous story of a dude getting ready to go to the army – get published. Not surprised because of the subject matter, but more because the combination of quiet, reflective pacing and loose, gestural linework means that you have a hefty, heavy book that does not have the slickness usually required to get someone to print a massive graphic novel. Kudos to Alternative Comics, Orff, and everyone who takes a chance and buys this fine read.

Thunder Lip "The Prophecy" (Lucid) Could rock more...if they were from Mt. Olympus! Best Thunder band ever!

Johnny Thunders "Who's Been Talking?" DVD (MVD) I wish Gentleman John Battles was watching this DVD with me so he could tell me if this is a well-known previously released concert DVD, if this is, in fact, his last recorded concert as claimed on the cover, and who that zaftig female vocalist is. But on my own, as a mere JT fan and not a worshipper, I can say that a). this Osaka stadium concert footage is of a fantastic show with Johnny is full control of powers as he wows the crowd with classics (including some Dolls and even Monkees material, and b). This looks like it was shot off of Youtube. Mind you, the original concert is pro-shot with well-edited multi-cameras, but this DVD is blurry like a low resolution computer file.

Thunderwing "Bang" (Thee Liars Club Municipal Recording Co., Chicago, ThunderwingUSA.com Myspace.com/Thunderwing) This is easily one of the finest, no frills, High Energy R&R Band to come out of Chicago since The Mystery Girls (I mean the REAL Mystery Girls, who debuted 20 years ago, and stuck it out for about 10 years, albeit with a name change). Not unlike the M.G.s, Thunderwing has drawn from various late 60s-early 70s influences (e.g. The Stooges, Alice Cooper Group, Flamin' Groovies, MC5, T Rex - hence the name, and plenty of lesser known bands, too), and come up with something of their own, that's not an outright imitation (hello, Mooney Suzuki!). The fact that lead guitarist and pedal pusher (by that, I mean wah-wah pedal), Casey "The Baron Von" Sass, took guitar lessons from Brownsville Station's Michael Lutz isn't hurting them any. If you've been looking for some loud, fast, hard rockin' that has nothing to do with hardcore or Speed Metal, these boys are the ticket. I've seen local bands try to do, more or less, the same thing, and while some have been successful (particularly The Lust Killers, who I think have played three times in Chicago in the past 15 years. I think only The Cunts have broken THAT record!), too many of 'em seem to be just young enough to believe Guns n' Roses are relevant. While Thunderwing should be seen live to get the maximum effect, this will do just fine. It would be difficult to boil the energy from one of their live gigs down to a single shot, I mean, their bass player "The Flying Chris" Kolodz, once jumped off the stage and landed on me, and that's just one of the things I've witnessed that I CAN mention in print. They aren't trying to be "Bad Boys," however. They do live their music, but, they bring some much-needed humor back to the realm. What sets them apart from a lot of their peers is they can rock out with their cocks out, but, they remain focused. They've got SONGS. In this case, 11. They sound like they were at least nearing in the red, but, we never descend into true chaos. Still, controlling THIS madness is no easy feat. Drummer Dave "Dave" Horniak acts as the perfect foil for singer/guitarist, Kevin "Pistol Pants" McComb (no idea why they call him that) and Casey "The Aforementioned" Sass when they create a cacaphony comparable, at times, to the early Who. Most of these songs are just balls out crazy rockin' enough. Just like (unbeknownst to her) cover girl, Cynthia Myers (who still looks incredible, by the way), when you've got it all together, a little bit more or a little bit less might not kill the whole deal, but it's a hell of a balancing act, keeping such an explosive force of nature at bay. William S. Burroughs, also featured in Casey "I mentioned him twice already " Sass's cool Pop Art collage cover, was known for firing his guns off now and then, too. Burroughs inadvertently created the genre term, "Heavy Metal." Thunderwing takes it back to a time when Heavy Rock was actually heavy, and there's no guilt in THAT kind of pleasure.

Tiger Army "Music From Regions Beyond" (Epitaph/Hellcat) So Oi-riffically anthemic it made me get tiger stripe tattoos. "Sorry, Roger. You Tiger now!"

Tiger Cried Beef "The Facts About Fascism" (Carbon Records POBox 10718 Rochester NY 14610) Kitty cried tofu.

The Times "This Is London" (Art Pop/Cherry Red) This is a pretty awesome reissue of a record I wish I heard somewhat less than a quarter century late. The Times were a bastardized version of Television Personalities, sorta, and this is a new wave/mod/super clever pop masterpiece with lots of rolling R's and more hooks than Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's career.

Time Toy "Fly Swatter/Ice Water" (Iron Horse POB 1186 Athens GA 30603) You may recall this band from *Athens, GA: Inside Out*, but if you recall them so fondly that you wished they would get back together and find all their archival tapes and unleash them upon us, than you are hardcore into quirky jerky annoying music to the point where you should have your own quirk-jerk band!

Tina Sparkle "All Around Champion Screw-Up" (Thinker Thought 1002 Devonshire Rd Washington IL 61571) Tina-age riot!

The Toasters "One More Bullet" (Stomp/Union Label Group 78 Rachel E. Montreal QC H2W 1C6 Canada) Skanough already!

Toilet Boys "Sex Music" (Dead City, deadcityrecordsamerica.com) Though this proudly sleazy trashy rock band seemed destined for greatness a few years back, the fact is that glammy sex rock ain't exactly Coldplay or whoever these brats like today. Well, druggy, whiny dirty lyrics, Ramones covers, and androgynous rock balladry will always be number one with a bullet-shaped penis in my book!

The Touchers "The Underwater Fascist" (thetouchers.com) Touched me inappropriately, but I'm not reporting it!

Pat Todd & the Rankoutsiders "The Outskirts of Your Heart" (rankoutsiderrecords.com) Todd proves himself to be the least lazy cowgirl in the universe with his new band churning out a couple dozen exquisitely sung songs that leave his trash rock past in the dust and give Springsteen a run for his bandana!

Oscar Toney Jr. "Guilty: A Social Soul Renaissance" (Shout/Cherry Red) Though his singles (especially the Bell ones) are revered by collectors, and his voice has been a mighty weapon since the 60s, this reissue of a 2000 album frames his marvelous instrument in some pretty hokey production and playing, and some uninspired songwriting. But his voice is still great, in some ways better for the wear.

Too Negative zine (Jenny Gonzalez 571 W. 175th St. #65 NYC 10033) Raggedy, radical, naughty, tasty comix that make you feel dirty!

Touched "Funeral Dress" ep (Black Velvet Fucker) Classic Midwestern-style crazy punk that explodes in excellentness. Insane sounding and insanely good.

Town (Listen Loudest) Made me want to be a townie!

Toy Gun Cowboy "Star?...Or No Star?" "Reload"(Gutter Groove POB 8068 Long Beach CA 90808) This groovy whimsy made me bubble. Alternately, this is whimsical grooviness that made by booble.

Tractor Operator "Bleeding Hearts and Severed Limbs" (Jealous Butcher) I kept waiting for this to get great, which is definitely better than listening to something you never expect to get great.

Trafostations "Bum Deal" (Listen Loudest) Trafreaky!

Trakan "Opening Soon Under New Management" (Spade Kitty, spadekitty.com 304 N. Grove #3B Oak Park, IL 60302) Trakan is Rakan! Though that motto worked better with Dokken, Mr. D never made creepy roots music with the panache of these Trakmasters.

TrebleDamage (trebledamage.com) TroubleDammit! This rocks by any definition of "rocks."

Trecinda "It's My Time" (Wrightouch Entertainment) Gospel that ranges from traditional to pop to hip hop, but never strays from the church, as Trecinda sounds like a familiar, favorite vocalist in the best choir your church ever had.

The Trials of Darryl Hunt soundtrack (Young American 227 West 29th St. 6th Fl. NYC 10001) This benefit CD (to help the unjustly incarcerated) features stellar tracks by both ruffneck rappers and cerebral indie rockers. But, c'mon, nobody digs both those things. Except of course, every reviewer at Pitchfork...let's check...huh? It only got a 7.7? What the fuck do they want, this has Dead Prez, Califone, Ras Kass, Andrew Bird, Spider Loc, Clap Your Hands Say Yeah, and the Last – Freakin' Poets! Well, I'm going for an 8.8, so there!

Frank Tribes "Gallery" (SEN 4312 N. Newcastle Harwood Heights IL 60706) Twice as good as the Beatles.

Triclops! "Cafeteria Brutalia" (Sickroom pob 47830 Chi Il 60647) Rocks and rampages with three times the clops!

Truckeebrothers "Double Happiness" (Populuxe) This is a more classic rock n roll record than 85% of what they play on Classic Rock stations.

Tsunami Rising "the exploration for an explanation" (1414 Thompson Ave Gloucester NJ 08030) Danko Jones meet Sublime, fights, and Sublime kicks Danko's ass.

Tanya Tucker DVD (Quantum Leap/MVD) An absolutely outstanding performance, featuring Tucker, dressed in basically a glitter disco Wonder Woman costume, literally shaking her ass for an appreciative southern audience. Tucker began her career in the 70s as a child singing far too mature songs, and she settled in as a woman in the 80s holding court in one of Country's most prosperous eras. But this performance catches her somewhere in between, being simultaneously girlish and womanly, and balancing expert showmanship with a sexuality that has an almost immature silliness to it. But man oh man, the quality of the songs and the quality of her voice are unbelievable. Pick up this DVD and you will be all Tuckered out!

Tuff Luvs "Party Dudes" (New Art School, Newartschool.net) Should be called "Fuckin' Hell Yeah They're Party Dudes! Whooo!" Rocks like actual rocks!

Tunes and Tones (thetunesandtones.com) True to its promise, this contains both tunes and tones...and a few heavy ideas and light laffs as well!

Tunnel of Love "Rockin' Rollin' Bitches" (Big Neck) Bitch slapped me with a fuzzy rock n roll appendage and I paid for it gladly. This is wicked music that makes the Demolition Doll Rods sound wholesome.

Turbonegro "Retox" (Cooking Vinyl POB 246 Huntington NY 11743) This is good and nasty, but it's just rock, and no longer the kind of impressively ugly power-garage music the band originally made. And even back then it was only the bottle rockets up the caboose that sold the act to me. But I'm glad they are doing good, I'm just not as hyped as you are about them.

Tunng "Good Arrows" (Thrill Jockey) Not the Gene Simmons tribute band of the same name (though rumor is this band does a wicked cover of "Lick It Up"), this is perhaps the heaviest delicate music band out there, making futuristic old time sounds that certainly escape the freak folk ghetto.

Frank Turner "Campfire Punkrock" (Xtramile) Not sure how this is punkrock, but these folky, protest-sounding (even when they are personal) acoustic and vox songs are pretty awesome.

Twisted TV DVD Vol. 1 (Go Kart) There are a lot of bad bands and bad videos and bad independent filmmakers out there, and Go Kart documents them for you. The two standout highlights here are Danko Jones vampire rock n roll video and a hilarious Queen tribute from the Vandals.

Two Girls "Dog Will Bark" (Falzone 724 E Behrends Peoria IL) Balls to the wall bluesrock/Futuristic Dragon music that made me want to take bong hits.

Tyvek/Cheveau split single (S-S) Tyvek is jarring – and tricky (I listened to the noise locked groove for 47 minutes) and Cheveau was spooky – like the avant-garde Misfits. Thus, this brutal battle of the bands is a tenacious tie.

The Uglybeats "Take A Stand" (Get Hip) The more I hear of this Ugliness the more I'm convinced these Texans are the premiere retro garage act working in this country. The joy of their garage pop music is pure and their love of the 60s is never hokey nostalgia. If you sleep on this nifty combo, you ain't got no alibi.

Ugly Things magazine (ugly-things.com) We bow to the greatness of this magazine, even if we haven't been able to finish one of these massive love letters to 60s rock since 1999. Don't call this the Bible of garage rock - - the Bible is shorter!

Umetniki "kaj bi steli ti umetniki (Slusaj) So futuristic that I already listened to this next year.

Ungdomskulen "Cry-Baby" (Ever, everrecords.com) Ungood-skulldumbing.

The Unit Breed "Lost Eyes" (New Disorder) Should be called The Eunoch Bleed! I mean that as a grand compliment.

Until Further Notice (9968 Campaign Dr. South Jordan UT 84095) Wish it was further.

Up the Empire "Light Rides the Super Major" (The Cougar Label 300 Richardson St. Brooklyn NY 11222) It grooves, but challenges you at the same time. A groove challenge, if you will.

Urban Legends "Of Old Lost Days" (Contraphonic) Sounds like your longtime favorite record the first time you hear it. Weird, but warm.

Utah Carol "Rodeo Queen" (POB 220279 Chicago, IL 60622) Country-rooted loveliness from an organically intertwined duo that make some amazing noise. One of Chicago's hidden gems.

U2 "The DVD Collectors Box" DVD (Chrome Dreams) Two boring somewhat contradictory documentaries. Good for Bono that nothing bad ever happened to him and his posse, but bad for documentarians.

The Vagabonds comic (Alternative Comics) Josh Neufield explores the weird concept of an anthology style book where different writers contribute stories that one artist (Neufield) illustrates. But the twist is, Neufield has the vision and dexterity to switch visual gears so deftly that he marries each source (artists, poets, comix veterans, song lyrics) with a visual poetry that's mighty impressive. Definitely a book to support.

The Valerie Project (Drag City) Apparantly if you want to get these Neo-Folk Psyche heads to focus you just need to give them an assignment. This all-star Espers/Fursaxa/Philly Pholk Scene get-together has the kids making a new score for an arty Czech 60s film based on a 1945 book. So basically this is a musical book report, and I'd give it an "A," as this is pretty killer, even without the movie (which the musicians are touring with, currently). Pardon my obviousness: Mindblowing!

Kenny Vance & the Planotones "Soundtrack to the Doo Wop Era" (Ace, POB 116 Ft Tilden NY 11695) Super vet Vance (doo wopper in the 50s, the original Jay in 1960s group Jay and the Americans, studio ringer in the 70s) has a smooth voice. When the arrangements lean towards smooth jazz this is a little over the top, but when classic doo wop arrangements prevail so does Vance's charm. Clearly, neither doo, nor wop, will ever die!

Vancougar "Losin' It" (Scratch 726 Richards St Vancouver BC V6B 3A4 Canada) VanKILLER! These ladies bring the pleasant noise and know how to play their toys.

David Vandervelde "The Moonstation House Band" (Secretly Canadian 1499 West Second St. Bloomington IN 47403) Makes David Bowie sound like David Arquette! Jeepsterrific!

Variant Cause "Excavating Variant Cause 1980s Pacific Northwest Volume 2" (Variantcause.com, POB 363 Astoria OR 97103) More New Wave/bar rock/blues/jazzy weirdness from the only band to not go crossover metal in the late 80s. In fact, they go No Wave dub reggae, which I didn't see coming.

Vayizaku "It Begins" (vayikazu.com) Vayizakrap.

Veil Veil Vanish "Into A New Mausoleum" (veilveilvanish.com) Sorta Sonic Youth wrapped in darkwave, which ain't a bad burrito.

Velcro Lewis and his 100 Proof Band/Tijuana Hercules split (OSR 6627 S. Woodlawn Chicago IL 60637) These two bands not only rock they **R-O-C-K**. Chicago, throw away your Smashing Pumpkins CDs and make an altar to this record!

Velcro Stars "Hiroshima's Revenge" (HHBTM POB 742 Athens GA 30603) Velcro SUPERstars! Rocking indie rock that's only slightly whiney!

Velella Velella "the bay of Biscay" (Big V) Funk you very much!

Velocet "a quick and dirty guide to war" (Eyeball pob 179 Kearny NJ 07032) Velosowhat.

Velveeta Heartbreak "I Shot the Invisible Man" b/w Secret Beach Boys Fans parts 1&2" (Semper LFi PMB 111 144 N. 7th St. Brooklyn NY 11211) ***You're Not the Boss of Me*** zine (velveetaheartbreak.blogspot.com) Our good friend MJB is a bubblepop god that no one worships, but we are starting the cult right now. Will make your ears smile. VH/MJB has also assembled a boss collage/drawing book about the concept of bosses, art, politics, power and penises.

Jamie Vernon "Time Enough At Last" (Bullseye 180 Station St suite 53 Ajax ON L1S 1R9 Canada) Not surprisingly Vernon, a bigwig at Canada's premiere power pop label, leans towards hooky, charming tunes, though most have surprising subtlety for a man who helped put the Viletones and Kings back on the map. This is also his 2nd consecutive *Twilight Zone*-themed album title, so maybe he's a weirder dude than he lets on.

Vixen ""Live and Learn" (Demolition) Yes, a new Vixen record. Though it sounds like it was written and recorded in 1994. Which is pretty impressive considering the last time I heard Vixen was 1989!

The*Vocokesh "...all this and Hieronymus Bosch" (Strange Attractors) This musical tribute to H. Bosch is a little short on beak people (then again, "Disco Duck" wasn't, and it featured far less powerful improvisations) and long on psychedelic genius soundscapes. Boshed my brains in!

Ral Partha Vogelbacher "Shrill Falcons" (Monotreme) Vogelbadass! That's what I call a weirdo masterpiece.

Volt (In The Red) Should be called Pole Volt, because I seriously felt this asskicking record in my pole. And their album should be called "Donkey Punch," because listening to it felt like being fucked and clobbered at the same time.

Von Sudenfed "Tromatic Refelxxions" (Domino, Dominorecordco.us) Disco music by drunk robots.

The Vultures (www.bigmuddyrecords.com) Drunkabilly party music that one would be an idiot to criticize or argue against.

This is the music every kid in America should aspire to make and/or rumble to.

Vulture Whale (vulturewhale.com) Swampy southern pop that swampilly pops.

Waitin On A Train "In the Path of Pain" (Bona Fide POB 185 Red Lion PA 17356) Sublime urban hillbilly enchanting spells! There's no magic like mandolin magic!

Rick Wakeman "the other side of..." DVD, "Gole! The Official Film of the 1982 World Cup" soundtrack CD, "The Burning" soundtrack (MVD) OK, you're a video/record label and you cut a deal with a legendary God of Prog, the great Yes-man, Rick Wakeman. Great! But what he wants to release is a stand up comedy DVD and some soundtrack albums that strain the definition of obscure like a Stretch Armstrong doll pulled six feet in either direction. Not so great! But, the good news is that the DVD is pretty engaging, not so much for the flourishy piano excursions that Wakeman engages in between funny anecdotes and dirty jokes about animals shoving objects up their keesters, but rather because of the stories, jokes, and bad accents (a funny accent always helps a Japanese diarrhea routine). The two soundtracks also lean towards flourishes rather than interstellar prog-isms, but they are OK. Ironically, the only time I saw Yes live was when the World Cup came to Chicago a dozen years after this soundtrack. Soccer Rocks the Globe, if you didn't already know.

Rupert Wates "Coast to Coast" (Bite 234 Seeley St. Brooklyn NY 11218) Rupert never waits to unleash another ultra dramatic singer-songwritier cliché, but his boldness and confidence outweighs the corniness (and almost outweighs the smooth jazz sax solo that sneaks in there) to make this musical roadtrip worth riding along with.

Dale Watson "The Little Darlin' Sessions" (Koch) Though word around Austin is that Watson denounces this release, other than oppressively modern production that serves the music poorly, there is nothing to be ashamed of here. Capturing an era of classic country music, with the clever craftsmanship, catchy hooks, and sincere delivery, as well as anyone has in years, Watson is a true pleasure to listen to here. That is, if you can get past the patina of Def Leppard recording techniques.

Watzloves "Catch Me A Possum" (Voodoo Rhythm) D.M. Bob's country/honkytonk/Cajun band notches down the New Orleans influence this time around and gets more into country ballads and beautiful lady singing. And I LOVE IT!

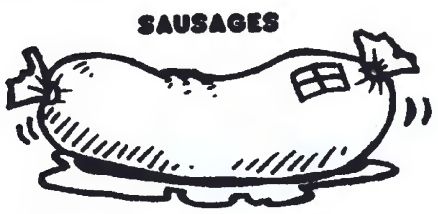
Weak "Back From the Gooch" (Turborock 2, Place Fontette 14000 Caen France) Should be called "Wreak" because these trashy hard rockers wreak rock n roll havoc from France to Pluto!

Fred Weaver "Five Digit Land" (Apocalypse the Apocalypse 5274 Glenburnie Dr Baton Rouge LA 70808) This indie songster has a pretty dreary voice, but I guess he's from Louisiana, so maybe his house sunk or something. He gets a dreary pass.

David Wechsler "Vacations" (Mekkatone) Absolutely delightful American songwriting music that seems to have nothing to do with groundbreaking work in the field of psychological IQ testing for children, so this must be a different David Wechsler. One who didn't die a quarter century ago. Although I played this for some kids and it was easy to tell by their reactions which ones were stupid, so who knows?

Wednesday Night Heroes "Guilty Pleasures" (BYO) I didn't know Canada had streets that were "street" enough to produce this kind of street punk. This will hump your humpday!

Chuck E. Weiss "23 and Stout" (Cooking Vinyl pob 246 Huntington NY 11743) West coast hipster extraordinaire (you hang around with Tom Waits long enough and you get smeared with cool) gets past the traditional blues here and enters early Waits songwriting (as well as old time genre screwing around) territory. And it's a good thing as this disc is far more charmy than swarmy. Also notable: after a couple of listens I think that there are some subliminal messages that clear up longtime rumors about Chuck E.: he was not in love with Ricky Lee Jones and he didn't start those scandalous rumors about the Rock-A-Fire Explosion that put Showbiz Pizza out of business, making way for Chuck E's rat-themed pizza empire.



"We Love the Blowtops" tribute EP (Big Neck POB 8144 Reston VA 20195) Even if you don't HEART the Upstate New York kings of ugly, you must like Jay Reatard and Vilent Lovers Club, so their krazy kovers, amongst others in this double single colored vinyl collectors' treasure, make this worth the plunge! One tragic omission: Where's the Skimask and the Bucketman track?

Whistle Jacket "Stop Start Skip and Jump (Giving Away Records) Whistle blows.

Whiskey Daredevils "Old Favorites" (Knock Out, www.knock-out.de) One thing this CD makes clear is that making countrified versions of classic hardcore and punk songs is way better than all those "lounge" versions of hardcore and punk songs that keep popping up since the early 90s. But that's about all it proves, as this is pretty unessential, though the Misfits' creepy monster lyrics sung in a hillbilly twang is sorta strange and amusing. And how did Slapshot get into The Canon with Bad Brains, the Sex Pistols, the DKs, the Ramones and Black Flag? OK, I guess this is pretty fun.

The Whitsundays (Friendly Fire, friendlyfirerecordings.com, 205 Lexington Ave. 2nd Floor New York, NY 10016) These Canucks craft some winning tracks that are decidedly retro (sounding like some of the more ambitious early Troggs songs, and a bit like the Zombies, or the first few Pink Floyd singles) yet don't sound nostalgic or derivative. Should be called The Hit-sudays!

Wendy O. Williams and the Plasmatics – The DVD (MVD) I have to bow to this documentary, which despite its amateurish superfan tone, completely changed my opinion on a musical icon. Dismissing the Plasmatics as either pathetic gimmick rock failures or bordering on genius gimmick rock successes is harder to do after seeing droves of footage of Wendy O in action. And certainly, it isn't the critics or road crew or band member talking heads that do the convincing, but the live footage. If you have even a tiny belief that there is a legitimate medium called Performance Art than it is impossible to not recognize how deft and intelligent and challenging and sharp an artist this woman was. Far from a stoned, violent provocateur, the late chainsaw wielder proves herself to be a woman who knew exactly what she was doing.

Wet Confetti "Laughing Gasping" (Rice Bird/Pampelmoose 1875 SE Belmont Ave Portland OR 97214) I'm not saying this is dirty robot sex music, but listening to is gave me a case of rusty gonorrhea.

Whiskey Daredevils "The Essential..." (Knock Out) Hillbilly punk rock boogie rock n roll that celebrates vice so convincingly that I'm considering becoming a meth addict.

Miss Alex White & the Red Orchestra "Space and Time" (In The Red POB 50777 LA, CA 90050) Best band in Chicago, hands down. White is our Iggy, Patti, Bowie, and Leather Tuscadero rolled up in one.

The White Barons "Up All Night with..." (Gearhead, gearheadrecords.com) I am too genuinely scared of this thundering, tough-broad-fronted band to say anything critical, so...yayyyy White Barons!

White Flame "American Rudeness" (Munster) This triumphant re-release of an ultra-obscure mid-70s rock album resurrects a flawed masterpiece. Flawed because they try to fake Mothers of invention weirdness/humor, but a masterpiece because it's so ridiculous and decadent and rocking that it's bizarre that no one liked them in 1977!

White Magic "Dark Stars" (Drag City) Actual witch spell music.

White Shoes and the Couples Company (Minty Fresh) What do you call an Indonesian band on an indie rock label? Indie-nesians! That joke would work better if they played rock n roll, as this is actually super grooving cocktail jazz exotica that would be ten point five years late if it weren't for its timeless grooviness and the vocalist's stunning beauty.

The Who "Endless Wire" (Universal) If they put out a record every few years and this came out it would be OK, but to wait several decades and then release this minor, vaguely decent, disjointed, unspectacular, mildly pleasant album is incredibly confusing, There are a couple of good moments in the mini-rock-opera "Wire and Glass" (the 2- half of the album) and "Mike Post Theme" is a pretty odd, enjoyable tune, but for the most part this album asks "Why?" rather than "Who?"

The Wildbirds (Universal) Un-classic rock.

Wildphyr "Movement" (Wildphyr.org) Phyr whoever sent me this!

Andre Williams "Aphrodesiac" (Vampisoul) The same as the awesome Chicago/Pravda CD, but if you're reading this in Europe you can save a few Euros by buying Andre's most focused, funky, groover in many moons.

Willowz "Chautauqua" (Dim Mak) Coolly desperate rock – like Fonzie on crank.

Willycranes "Happy Motoring" (Locomotive) So punk it strained my punkmuscles.

Robert Windpony "Sky Blue," "Moon Rider" (windpony.com) I don't know that you will need two CDs of atmospheric, resonant, ethereal Native American flute solos, but you really should have one. This haunting music in the background will make whatever you are doing seem important, be it Tai Chi, the dishes, or grouting.

John Winkowski "Tiger Woods – The Shot" (johnwinkowski@yahoo.com) Earnest garage rock tribute to Mr. Woods that swings like whatever-type-of-golf club-swings-real-hard.

The Winston Jazz Routine "Sospiri" (The Record Machine 4015 Charlotte 1South KC, MO 64110, thereocrdmachine.net) The Whiny Spazz Routine.

Winter Sounds "Porcelain Empire" (Livewire 3050 Royal Blvd S-suite 110 Alpharetta GA 30022) When melodic punk is done right it's hard to beat, and these Athenians hit that groove.

Wisely (Oglio) Wishy Washly.

Witchcraft "The Alchemist" (Rise Above) The kind of mighty rock that makes you want to ride a wild steed across a barren land in search of...something!

Witch Hats "Wound if a Little Horse" (Inertia) To sound witchy apparently creepy lead bass is important and crazy incantation singing don't hurt.

With Friends Like These DVD (CTGFilms) Though this DVD says "A Melvin Jones Film" on the front cover, this isn't a film, it's some kind of Z-grade sitcom pilot, that is so ridiculously unfunny that it almost hurts. Starring the generally awesome Trina ("Pull Over that Ass is Too Fat"), this is a comedy that actually made me feel incredibly sad. The worst part is that even though it is not filmed in front of an audience (it is shot in real rooms of houses, with bad lighting and echo-ey sound) there is an obnoxious, almost surreal laughtrack. Pull over, that laugh is too flat.

Gretchen Witt "Six" (Gretchenwitt.com) Combine a chillingly dreamy voice and big soulful eyes and you got me hooked, even if the music tiptoes around the kind of college coffeehouse music I'd usually cross the street to avoid.

WMFO "Insensitivity Training" (Black & Blue) Anybody could be the Pride of Somewhere, but to be the Shame of St, Louis (yes, St. Louis, a city that knows its share of shame) is a mighty achievement, And these scumrocking absurdists know how to growl out the smut, guts and cuts (and by cuts I mean deep gashes). Bloody good. Well, maybe just bloody...and infected.

Woodpecker! "f-hole" (woodpeckermusic.com) As if simply being a Metal-punk bluegrass band wasn't enough, this band actually has great songs with awesome, clever, insightful, satirical lyrics as well. This gave me wood, then pecked it!

World Mass Homicide "presents...sing-a-long songs" (Roadhouse Tunes 9102 Edwards Dr. St. Louis MO 63132) Bizarre evil ugly no-fi epic music that scared me, but rather than scaring me straight, actually scared me crooked.

Wussy "Left For Dead" (Shake It) Wuss-arific! Rocked me thoughtfully and had cowbell!

Marva Wright "Do Right Woman – The Soul of New Orleans" (Shout!/Cherry Red) Because this is on Cherry Red one might expect this to be a reissue of classic 60s or 70s music, but though Wright is the right age to be an old school r&b diva, she actually has only been recording for the last 20 years, coming to this career late in life, and since becoming a New Orleans icon. Thus, this CD, while being a fantastic showcase for an outstanding gospel-trained voice, suffers from the recording don'ts of 80's-and-beyond slick blues session work. That said, Wright is a phenomenal talent and if you need an introduction to her work, this is a fine place to start.

Robert Wyatt "Comicopera" (Domino) After 38 years or so in the game this Soft Machinist has the art rock down better than most, and this three act something or another gets personal and global and pretty damn depressing and pretty darned encouraging. Eno and Paul Weller show up, but not in a hip hop album cameo sort of way. And Monica Vasconcelos can sing!

XBXRX "Wars" (Polyvinyl polyvinylrecords.com) XBXRXcellent! This is better than pancakes!

X27 "antilove" (Narnack) Xtra bizarrely enchanting. Hella heavy, yet it floats!

The Yarrows "Plum" (Empyrean POB 197 Warren RI 02885) If Neil Young was a whiner this would sound like his best album in a while. But he's not, really.

You "Flashlights" (Please Rock/GoTo Your Room) Youawn.

You Can Work Any Hundred Hours A Week You Want (In Your Underwear)!! (Microcosm) This is a great overview at the non-glamour of running a punk publishing zine collective/company, but it might have made a better one sheet (as Microcosm was once semi-famous for) than book.

Neil Young: Under Review 1976-2006 DVD (MVD) One of the lazier entries in this series, this documentary seems to start without proper context, is edited so that different critics make the same points over and over (often at the wrong times), and seems odd is scope – Young made 97 LPs between '76 and '06, who needs to hear critiques of all of them, and why not start earlier? But you can always count on arrogant rock critics to be amusing, so this is far from a waste.

Jenny Owens Youngs "Batten the Hatches" (Nettwerk 1545 Wilcox Ave. suite 200 Hollywood, CA 90028) Should be named Jenius Owen Young! It made me sad when she sang that love grew in her like a tumor, then I thought it made me happy when she sang a bouncy song about a coyote digging through her trashcans, but it turned out to be a metaphor for more bad lovin', so then I got sad again. Emotional rollercoaster!

You're an Angel, You li'l Devil zine (POB 17131 Anaheim, CA 92817-7131) Devil girls are cool! This clarifies that hellaciously.

The Youths "Decontrol" EP (Criminal IQ) These Portu-geese make some ridiculously punk rock pleas that are sure to please. I hate using the phrase "'77 Style," but I just want to make it clear that this sounds like the real fucking deal.

YVEL (myspace.com/yvelyvel) YAWNVL.

Renee Zawawi "L-E-G-E-N-D-S" (888C 8 Avenue suite 124 NY, NY 10019) Za-Wowee! Minimalist dance music that you can't dance to because you are too enchanted by this exotic goddess to move!

Zeitkratzer "Lou Reed Metal Machine Music Performed by Zeitkratzer" (Asphodel 763 Brannan St. SF, CA 94103) If there is one question that has haunted underground music fans for years – the 900 pound gorilla in the room that has been the subtext of every music review from *Sniffin Glue* to *Pitchfork* – it has certainly been, 'would Lou Reed's "Metal Machine Music" album benefit from being meticulously transcribed and performed live by an experimental German chamber music ensemble?' Well, we can all exhale now, because the answer is...YES, sort of... For those who embraced Reed's work as either a chaotic masterpiece (an obelisk for future noise artists to genuflect before) or as a prankish 'fuck you" to the recording industry, this be a disappointment, for Zeitktatzer convincingly argues that "MMM" is a profoundly important work of contemporary composition. By making it un-noisy and focusing on textures, tones, and arrangements, this casts Reed as a far different kind of music god. Much like the live Tina Turner footage that ends the film "What's Love Got to Do With It," Reed himself shows up at the end as both an example of the real deal and an endorsement, but that is somewhat unnecessary and ceremonial, as the body of this is a solid, impressive, obsessive piece that was not waiting on it's man.

Zelda and the Unibrows "Unreason" (Waiting For Lunch, Unibrows.Com) The best concept records are the ones where after a thorough listen the confused listener has no idea what the hell the concept is. The rich, dense, strange journey through orchestral/futuristic/spoken word/everything-else-you-can-think-of recordings is gloriously confounding, and proudly gets a Z-grade!

Zemlja br. 9 "polja oscilatora" (Slusaj) The zemljaliest!

Zalutaji DJ Zdena "U Potragi Za Izgubljenom Informacijom" (Slusaj) Super progressive strange-o sonic emissions that made me take an epic mental journey – and I flew first class.

Zillionaire "The Street Lights Have Been Turned Down" (New Grenada, newgrenada.com) Thorough indie rock pleasantness!

The Zincs "Black Pompadour" (Thrill Jockey) Lyrically clever and literate, vocally droll, and musically glumphy. Not my cup of chamomile.

The Zinester's Guide to Portland (Microcosm) If you plan to go to Portland and you don't get this excellent underground guidebook you are insane. And if you don't plan to go to Portland and you read this cover to cover you are way crazier.

Zisk zine (801 Eagles Ridge Rd Brewster NY 10509) This baseball zine is a hit! And it's less annoying than being swarmed by midge bugs,

Zornjak (Slusaj) Profoundly funkay!

GUEST REVIEWER MADELINE BOCARO

Bryan Ferry "Dylanesque" (Virgin) Bryan Ferry is the ultimate image of sophistication. He's European, handsome, suave and elegant, immaculately fashionable, and that crooning voice of his just oozes glamour and style. He wouldn't be so credible if this sickening, syrupy image were all he had going for him. Ferry's ultimate appeal to me is the songs he writes, the covers he chooses to sing, and that he is the absolute worst dancer in the world! Really – the man can't dance, and it's astounding to see him try! It's ironic that someone so prissy and prim would revere someone so scruff and folksy as Bob Dylan, and that the result would be an uncanny blend of such disparate styles.

Aside from his role in the great Roxy Music (a new reunion album is in the works!) and putting the glamour in Glam rock, Ferry's solo albums have always been a delight. Especially delightful were his previous Dylan covers, the first being "It's A Hard Rain's Gonna Fall' on *These Foolish Things* in 1973. You can actually feel that he's having fun rocking this tune!

On *Dylanesque*, '"Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues" is spiced up in a similar 'Hard Rain' groove. Unearthing the beauty of Dylan's striking melodies, retaining harmonica yet adding strings and other odd instruments, such as castanets, a soulful backbeat and his own debonair flair, Ferry gracefully transforms eleven of the bard's songs, skillfully illuminating their intimacy. Dylan's pure poetry is showcased and honoured by the complementary arrangements, and by Ferry's sincere smooth and sentimental vocal delivery.

Dylan's nasty little ditty, 'Positively 4 Street' is slowed down, dressed up and disguised as a beautiful, almost loving ballad. The final line 'Yes, I wish that for just one time you could stand inside my shoes - you'd know what a drag it is to see you' now becomes a punch line! How Ferryesque! 'Make You Feel My Love' is now an atmospheric soundtrack to a tear-jerker. These two arrangements are reminiscent of Ferry's gorgeous adornment of "Don't Think Twice, It's Alright" on his 2002 *Frantic* album.

"Gates Of Eden" is given a gospel-tinged Elvisesque vocal treatment. It's throaty and cool. The Bossa Nova beat of "It's Not For You" is equally as sweet as George Harrison's Beatlesque version. 'Simple Twist Of Fate' rolls along exquisitely with some subtle "oohs", as do "The Times They Are A- Changin'" and "Baby Let Me Follow You Down". The arrangement on "All I Really Wanna Do" is at once modern and medieval.

OK Mr. Ferry, that was a nice diversion. Now hurry up and get back to work on the upcoming Roxy Music album we've been promised!

LOU REED - THE BERLIN WALL OF SOUND - In the over-indulgent age of Rock Opera came this strange anomaly by Lou Reed – the first and only Rock Novel - his third solo album *Berlin*. It followed his uber successful 1972 *Transformer* album. Everyone expressed their disdain for *Berlin's* creepy cabaret – a dismal story of a depraved couple's love, hate and decay. Lush in its' simplicity, the melancholy orchestral score illustrates their strange romance. Prostitution, drugs, betrayal, beatings, suicide, apathy - the whole gamut of Velvet Underground song topics converge in the lives of two wretched people in a decadent city.

The lyrics read as if Brecht and Weil sprayed graffiti on opposite sides of the Berlin Wall. It sounds disturbing even by description, yet the delicate, evocative musical score illuminates the sadness of the story, and it somehow becomes beautiful. We actually start feeling sorry for these people! Through Reed's detached apathetic narrative, we can clearly see the seedy rooms they live in, the bars, streets and alleys they scour for drugs. Only a true artist can make this happen. Listeners just didn't get it – for thirty years.

Now in hindsight, Reed's masterpiece is given due respect – even by the artist himself now age 64, who just thought of it as "Another one of my albums that didn't sell." It apparently took much convincing for Reed to perform the work in its' entirety at St. Anne's Warehouse in Brooklyn in December. All four nights sold out quickly. Sets and films were specially created for the theatrical multi-media event by painter Julian Schnabel and his daughter. The album's original producer, Bob Ezrin (the man behind *KISS* and Alice Cooper's early hits, and the other 'Wall' by Pink Floyd) is also the musical director of the live show. There is a horn section, and a choir is joined by Antony Hegarty of Antony and the Johnsons. Ezrin is on stage directing the proceedings. (The performance travels to Australia's Sydney Festival in 2007).

Upon the album's completion, producer Bob Ezrin had a semi-nervous breakdown and was quoted as saying "I think the best idea is that we put it in a box, put the box in a closet, leave it there and don't listen to it again." Musicians on the album, recorded in London included the horns of the Brecker brothers, Steve Winwood on keys, drummer Aynsley Dunbar, and Cream's Jack Bruce on bass. For the live performance Lou nabbed Steve Hunter (who is also Reed's classic *Rock N' Roll Animal* featured player) on guitar, along with a few of Lou's long-time comrades.

A friend said, "Oh, you're going to the Lou Reed show – that should be fun!" It made me laugh. This was not about fun. This is the most depressing album ever made! Of course it bears some of Lou's sarcastic trademarks. The heroine is on heroin, he rhymes vial with vile, and eye with I, but no amount of unintentional levity can raise us from the depths of despair in this pitiful story.

After a brief overture of "Sad Song" by the astounding young choir, the song "Berlin" begins eerily with warped, ghoulish voices - a drunken birthday party, clinking glasses and slurred voices. A warm on-screen glow is lit by candles. The lilting, bluesy cabaret of the piano is the only sound, until Lou begins his familiar monotone narrative.

In the purely Germanic oom-pah of "Lady Day" we are taken to the bar where the heroine, Caroline sings in her moment of glory. As she walks home, Reed artfully depicts her life with few words; In the hotel that she called home - It had greenish walls - a bathroom in the hall."

"Men Of Good Fortune" is illustrated by marching military men, poor peasants and workers on-screen. Rich or poor, for better or for worse – and Lou, he just don't care at all! The song is extended to exhibit the magnificent dueling guitar work of Hunter and Reed. All of the instruments sound exactly as they do on the album. This is a major achievement. It wasn't like seeing the movie version of a book. It was as though Lou was reading the book (album) to us in his living room by the fire.

After the pulsating intro to the druggy "How Do You Think It Feels" sung in the first person of a succinct, articulate drug addict, ("Walking around for five days...cos you're afraid of sleeping.") everybody on stage rocks out, including the horn section. During "Oh Jim", a hateful tale of betrayal another roaring Hunter/Reed guitar exchange ensues.

The delicate score of "Caroline Says (II)" illustrates the shattering and twinkling of broken glass in slow motion, and an almost soothing, shimmering ambiance during the lines, "She put her fist through the window pane - It was such a funny feeling." Then comes a cool musical chill during the line "It's so cold in Alaska" as Caroline, peacefully blacks out, leaving us 'comfortably numb'.

During "The Kids", with his eyes closed and intensity on his face, Lou achieved his best 'donkey gets hit by a train' guitar solo. With his eyes closed you could see Lou levitate a foot off the stage in his mind, as his instrument brayed in unison with a choir of crying children. It was one ugly/beautiful cacophonic moment among many this evening. "In the alleys and bars, no she couldn't be beat - that miserable rotten slut couldn't turn, anyone away. They're taking her children away."

In "The Bed" Caroline's suicide is explained..."And this is the room where she took the razor, and cut her wrists that strange and fateful night - And I said, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh what a feeling." Then the choir achieves the supernatural. It is ghostly and ghastly, eerily rejecting our heroine from heaven and taking us with her into the beyond for a moment, capturing that exact spooky, ethereal feeling from the record. Amazing!

The strings and choir tear at our hearts in the beautiful eulogy "Sad Song" which goes on and on until we are emotionally exhausted, and when it's over, we wish it wasn't.

About *Berlin*, in his usual sarcastic, deadpan Warholian delivery, Reed told *The New York Times*, "I'd never been there. It's just a metaphor. I like division."

The encore was a bit of a let down after the stunning *Berlin* performance. "Sweet Jane" with R&R Animal Hunter on guitar should have been incredible, but it was slow and without punch. Antony rendered a compelling version of "Candy Says", and another sick little ditty, "Rock Minuet" was a mellow treat. It was fitting that the encore was low-key because we were all in such a vulnerable condition after *Berlin*. Still, this was one of the most important live gigs I've ever seen. By the way, it was filmed for a future DVD release.

The next Reed revival on the horizon; Bob Ezrin is working with Berlin's avant garde orchestra Zeitkratzer on their version of Reed's infamous *Metal Machine Music*!(see review elsewhere in issue)

GUEST REVIEWER: JOSH ZANGER

Oreskaband "Oreskaband" (Sony Music) I feel kinda weird admitting that I put on Oreskaband's self-titled album and thought, 'This isn't half bad, I could probably listen to the whole thing.' Don't get me wrong, there's nothing bad about ska, teenage Japanese girls, or school uniforms in their own separate realms. But for anyone who listens, putting those three things together is the recipe for creepy uncle. To be totally honest, the six-member group is like a Japanese femme version of Less Than Jake, and really, that's a pretty big comparison for a bunch of teens who could have just as easily been contrasted with Avril Lavigne. The horn section is rounded in standard ska fashion – saxophone, trumpet, and trombone. The rest of the band is pretty standard form as well, this time for a punk rock set – guitar, bass, drums, and vocals. Apparently Oreskaband is a big deal in Japan, where they have advertising ties to Pocky, a popular type of candy. I don't know if this corporate elbow rubbing is looked down upon for musicians in Japan (certainly it would dub any punk or ska band as "sellout" in the US), but the music is energetic and poppy enough to move the band into the mainstream demographic anyways. The six songs here are laced with colorful horn bridges and offbeat chick-y electric guitar strums, followed with punk rock-speed distorted breakdowns by the whole group. For ska fans in the US, this won't be that much of a stretch. For most others, though, the whole thing reeks of novelty even if the girls can play.

SECRET DIARY

GUEST REVIEW: GENTLEMAN JOHN BATTLES

Loco Gringos (Saustex, Saustex PO Box 691356 San Antonio, Texas 78269, www.saustexmedia.com saustexmedia@aol.com) I'll come clean. While I lived through the Post Punk/What The Fuck mid-to-late 80s Dallas scene, which spawned the likes of Lithium Xmas, Peyote Cowboys, Mel Coolies, Shitty Beatles, and even The Reverend Horton Heat and The New Bohemians (Edie wasn't really the focal point, then), I really didn't get it with The Loco Gringos at the time...They were as popular for their lifestyle, arguably moreso, than their music itself. If you hung with The Gringos, you had to be prepared to party 24-7. I thought they were nice guys, but, as I don't drink or partake in...umm...substances, I didn't really get to know them at all. Their home, "Gringo Manor," was legendary, even back then, as THEE center for hard drinkin' and druggin', and the fact that they set up corn dog stands at their gigs (you have to remember, some of these kids probably hadn't eaten all week), and threw cans of beer into the audience, put the band in good stead with the local scenesters, but detracted from their music, which I tried to get into, but it just wasn't doing it for me. Even the press kit I received (written, in part, by Barry Kooda, late of The Nervebreakers and Yeah!Yeah!Yeah!) makes the claim that the band never really put on a great show, from a purely musical standpoint, and was more performance art, by way of Tijuana (no Donkey Show, natch, though they did set a plastic burro on fire). I was a bit surprised when I saw the revamped Gringos in '88 or '89, they weren't bad. Neither is this CD, a reissue of their sole LP (which came out posthumously, as guitarist and singer, "Pepe Lopez," nee Tom Foote, succumbed to a Heroin overdose in 1990. Also, a few years earlier, some Dallas cops beat the shit out of him for standing on top of his car at a St. Patrick's Day parade. Not that it aided in his demise, but it did put him on crutches for a while. They even had an antique wheelchair on hand for his use at The Prophet Bar). Their second bass player, Mark "Crashman" Chambers (AKA "Paco T.Blanco") I did know pretty well from Masters of Disasters, Mel Coolies, and The Cookin' Ones, and, with the return of original bassist, Don Foote (Tom's Brother and winner of the best band nickname award as "Pablo Cruz") on second guitar, the band sounded more solid than in their original incarnation, which was usually called "Drunk Rock" (comparable, perhaps, to The Replacements, free of Pop tendencies), or even "Garage Rock" (which I never bought. The considerably less popular Shitty Beatles were arguably the only REAL Garage Rock band in DFW at the time, and that includes the reformed Mouse and The Traps, Kenny and The Kasuals, and Larry and The Blue Notes. Kenny's boys, however, are back on track, today). Their best known track, "Nurture My Pig" warranted a cover version by The Reverend Horton Heat (more recently, too, The Rev also released his own tribute to the group, "Loco Gringos Like a Party." The title sez it all). With benefit of hindsight, I have to say these tracks aren't bad, at that. Kind of Psychedelic, not the kind of mindfuck that the Butthole Surfers were at that time, though not as borderline-Hippie as The Meat Puppets (mind you, I liked both bands, but neither one had a shelf life that exceeded 1989 with me). The majority of the songs, here, are about drinkin' (imagine that). The opener, "Texas Ranger Man," originally done by Doug Sahm during his "Country Groovin'" period, is almost unrecognizable, but, that's not a putdown. It originally appeared on the Triple XXX comp, " Dude, You Rock," with Horton Heat, Lithium Xmas, Rigor Mortis, and other survivors of the 1980s Deep Ellum Music Wars. From there, it sounds like a hangover, one that you can witness vicariously. Titles like "Let's Talk About Beer," "Thinkin' Bout Drinkin'," and "Mescal Breakfast" speak for themselves. A cover version of "Ain't No Sunshine," which appears here as "Ain't No Corndogs (when She's Gone)," strikes at the very necessities of life. When I went to school in Denton, we had thee OH, SO FINE "State Fair Corndog" stand, which was converted into a nightclub, "The Enterprise," where The Peyote Cowboys, Lithium Xmas, some guy called John Battles, probably The Gringos, and many others, played, but, God, I missed those corndogs.

GUEST REVIEWER: JAKE AUSTEN:

Hanson "The Walk" (3CG) Though the Hanson brothers heralded the late 90s bubblegum revival, anyone who expected them to disappear like S Club 7 or eventually take pop to a new plateau like Justin Timberlake wasn't paying attention. The Hansons were barely teens when they hit with "MMMBop," but they were already a self-contained band writing their own material, so it is not surprising that in the face of diminishing sales and major label indifference the band would scale down rather than fade away. And despite the pop element of their work, even their earliest album tracks make it clear that this group was striving for the cleaned-up version of the rootsy, upbeat, straightforward rock that made Dave Matthews and Hootie the toasts of college campuses. Not surprisingly, the still pretty (and pretty damn young, the oldest in 26) siblings have directed their attentions to college campuses over the last few years, building grassroots support amongst the twelve-year olds of 1997 for their self-released albums and DVDs. Their latest (on their own 3CG label, short for Three Car Garage, a testament to the group's unity-though-garage band-heritage attitude) is not as convincing as their recent acoustic live album, as both the upbeat tracks and ballads are almost too well-crafted. These do sound like radio hits that could be on either an urban country or adult contemporary station, but they are so slick and professional that we'd probably keep our finger on the tuner button to see what's on the next channel. That said, this album does introduce some Elton John-inspired songwriting ambitions, especially on the title track, that are keeping us interested in what all these young dudes do next.

Trans Am "Sex Change" (Thrill Jockey POB 08038 Chicago IL 60608) I'd like to apologize in advance to Trans Am for the following statement, on the off chance that they are being dead serious (and I suppose we better apologize to Bobby Conn while we're at it): Trans Am is by far the most hilarious band Thrill Jockey has ever thrust upon the world. When we first met this Washington, D.C.-birthed/trans-global based band over a decade ago they were the bratty little brother to Chicago's post rock acts. Recording with John McEntire, and sharing a record label and tour stages with Tortoise, they nonetheless mocked their Can-worshipping co-horts by giddily deconstructing (almost musically mocking) not only the German geniuses, but basically every prog icon from the previous four decades. Their absurd, irreverent journey over the subsequent years has seen them embrace electronica, disco, hard rock, soft rock, and plain old rock. After one theoretically darker political album a couple of years back, the gentlemen have returned with "Sex Change" (Thrill Jockey), their most delightfully ludicrous album yet, a genuinely joyful musical sideshow. Hear what would happen if a group of sleepy early eighties session musicians couldn't remember if they were scoring a porno or a video game! Hear instrumental music that somehow stays that way even when someone sings on them! Hear Morricone's teenage garage band composing chase music for *Hawaii 5-0*! Even when Trans Am ends the CD with some serious heaviness, its juxtaposition against the CD's prior acts of pop, goofy electronics, and post-Afropop seems just as novel as the rest of the album. This release guarantees that the rare joy that is a Trans Am concert will continue to deliver something that few of its fellow Class of '96ers could hope to: fun (and sore feet from dancing)!

GUEST REVIEWER: JEAN-EMMANUEL DUBOIS

Ilous & Decuyper "Ilous & Decuyper" (Lion, lionproductions.org) Bernard ILOUS & Patrice DECUYPER are probably two people you've never heard of. These guys are one of French pop's best kept early seventies secrets. This is a cult record amongst harmony pop enthusiasts and you really should intoxicate yourself with their Gallic take on Beatlesesque tunes with hints of early seventies west coast "laissez faire" all blended with continental cool. Vincent Tornatore's Lion productions is finally releasing this record for american ears and i'm pretty sure that the true pop lover will get a musical orgasm by listening to it! Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition and nobody expects a long forgotten French pop duo to shatter their world. I'm not sure about the former, but the latter is a real pleasure.

Les Shades (Tricatel, www.myspace.com/lesshades, www.tricatel.com) Who says that the French rock world is embarrassing?. In Paris, a new generation of teenagers are shaking up the old music biz establishment. The names of the Naast, Les Plasticines, Second sex, BB Brunes are everywhere: from the crowded hip joints to the covers of major French magazines. Of course, the music connoisseur has to take out "le bon grain de l'ivraie" (separate the cool from the crap). Les Shades are the most promising of these new acts and the freshness of their attitude and their fruity music, full of youthful pulp, will appeal to edgy rock fans all over the « free world ». Les Shades have their own sound but as we know since the Residents taught us « ignorance of your culture is not considered cool » they mix-up very well their tasty stew; made of some gallic garage, drops of cult punk and slices of non-revivalist mod attitude. I saw Iggy and his reformed Stooges on French telly some days ago and i couldn't help but think the whole show quite pathetic and decrepit. I wanted to yell through the screen to the ageing iguana, " come on guy, there's nothing wrong with performing rock n' roll in your sixties, but your whole routine seems so contrived and made us fell uneasy; like a strip tease by an elderly lady!" You can't pretend to be and act like a boiling teenager all your life! come on, accept maturity. Please, someone tell that to Iggy, Keith Richards , Mick Jagger or Steven Tyler. Tell them that they are the Zsa Zsa Gabor of pop music nowadays. Benjamin Etienne (21 years - guitar), Benjamin (17 vocals and guitars), Harry (16 years old drums) and Victor (17 years– bass) are more credible and are like their audience; full of adolescent urge and sparkles. "Le prix à payer ," "électrique," "le temps presse," "orage mécanique," the songs available on their brand new vinyl LP's deserve your hard earned cash and your ears. The educated amongst you will be happy to know that les Shades are produced by the great Bertrand Burgalat from Tricatel (see previous Roctober issue).

The Committee DVD (www.chaletfilms.com) Some cult movies are best left in our film buff dreams than they are actually being watched. Filmed in 1968 by Sykes, from a Max Steuer script, *The Commitee* is worth watching. This Brit movie is about the children of Swinging London; a time when people like Paul Jones (Manfred Mann), The Pink Floyd and a young American, going to the London School of Economics Max Steuer used to hang out together. It was another time and another world; when intellectuals, writers, economists, artists, filmmakers and musicians were able to exchange ideas and work on the same projects. *The Commitee* used to be a secret mainly shared by hardcore Pink Floyd fans, as it's soundrack was composed by the band (still recovering from Syd Barrett recent departure). It's true that the incidental music featured is fascinatingly hyptonic, as is the film's The Crazy World of Arthur Brown cameo, but it would be foolish to underrate the movie itself. Kinda like a cross between Patrick McGoohan's *The Prisoner* and Orson Welles' take on Kafka, "The Trial", *The Committee* is a product of it's time (the late sixties) with it's concern for topics such as questioning authority, free will, revolution and the State. Don't worry, it's not only a movie for nostalgic Berkeley activist-types. The movie is still vivid and questioning today; timeless brilliance shines through the whole picture, I can tell you. A hitchhiker slashes off the head of his innocent driver and then is taken to a grotesque and macabre committee. The eerie (and cerebral) fun then begins. A true lost gem that is craving for your attention, lovers of the bizarre and the cool everywhere! Don't wait for Tarentino or David Lynch to tell you it's cool!!! *The Commitee will soon be available on the Martyrs of Pop collection thru Chalet Films.*

GUEST REVIEWERS: BONNIE S. MASON AND JANICE BUXTON-DAVISON

AN ALICE COOPER REUNION – THE ORIGINAL "NICE GUYS"

Phoenix, AZ – December 16, 2006: They're certainly not "18" anymore, but when the original members of Alice Cooper reunited Saturday night, December 16 2006, they proved age is irrelevant as demonstrated by their stellar performance during an appearance for Alice Cooper's Christmas Pudding, at the Dodge Theater in Phoenix, Arizona. Alice Cooper's Christmas Pudding is an annual event sponsored by the Solid rock Foundation, a non-profit Christian organization focused on keeping teens on the right path, and out of trouble. Proceeds from this event will go to building a $5 million youth center on the campus of Grand Canyon University.

The much anticipated Alice Cooper Reunion was the final performance of the night, featuring Frontman-Alice Cooper, Bassist-Dennis Dunaway, Guitarist-Michael Bruce, and Drummer-Neal Smith. Missing was Lead Guitarist-Glen Buxton, also known as the "Blonde Bomber" who passed away in 1997. Damon Johnson, current Alice Cooper guitarist joined in as guest guitarist.

The evening began with a VIP Meet & Greet Reception in the lobby of the Theater where all celebrities of the show, including Dennis, Neal, Michael & Alice were introduced, and greeted by their adoring fans requesting autographs and photographs from their long-time idols.

The Christmas Pudding show began immediately following the reception, and after over 5 hours of performances by artists such as Tommy Shaw, Don Felder, Johnathan Cain, Stephen Stills, Danny Seraphine, Dick Wagner, Tesla and more . . . Alice Cooper, the Band that produced 7 albums plus the Greatest Hits, from 1968-1974,. . . finally hit the stage! They came on with the same gusto and energy they had over 32 years ago, opening with "No More Mr. Nice Guy"! They continued with "Be My Lover", "Under My Wheels", "Billion Dollar Babies", "Eighteen", and "Schools Out", nailing every song! Their musicianship was outstanding, and Alice's voice was dead on! Toward the end of the set, Alice introduced each band member, and respectfully paid tribute to Glen Buxton,, who was "the glue that held this group together". Alice said, "Glen was our juvenile delinquent . . . our own Keith Richards". Glen, who was born in Akron, Ohio, wrote some of the most recognizable guitar riffs in rock. He was also recently voted as one of the top 100 guitarists of rock by Rolling Stone magazine. Neal Smith, the "Platinum God", was introduced by Alice as always being in a friendly competition with Keith Moon over who had the most drums. "Neal always won!" laughed Alice. On Saturday night, Neal's drumming was the heartbeat of the show, playing perfectly on every tune including his unique signature intros for "Billion Dollar Babies"and "Under My Wheels". Dennis Dunaway was the most animated of the group, constantly moving about the stage doing his best Chuck Berry duck walk with his glowing green bass. Hard to believe he just turned 60. Michael Bruce, who wrote "Be My Lover", and who played lead on "Be my Lover", and "Eighteen" in the show, was visibly having fun interacting with the band. His unique ability to switch back and forth from lead to rhythm with ease is a quality any guitarist would envy.

Afterwards, Neal Smith, a Medina, Ohio native, is quoted as saying, "It was a late night, but was a great show, and I was proud of everybody in the band,. I was happy to do a great show for the fans that traveled literally from all over the planet to witness the reunion. I only wish we could have played longer." He went on to say probably the biggest compliment he heard afterwards was a comment made from a well-known musician who said, "Tonight, those songs sounded better than they have in over 32 years since the break up. They were played exactly the way they were supposed to be played. There's nothing like hearing those classic songs performed by the people who wrote them."

It was a packed house, a near sellout, with over 4000 tickets sold. Diehard fans traveled from all over the U.S., including the Midwest, East Coast and Alaska. Globally, there were attendees from Canada, U.K., France and even Australia!
After this momentous occasion, what might be next? Possibly a new tour, new album, or perhaps . . . .the much deserved induction of the *original group* into the Rock 'N Roll Hall of Fame!

GUEST REVIEWER: ALICE TRUONG

THE REBIRTH OF SGT. PEPPER: Everybody's got a front-seat ticket to the biggest show of the century.
Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band is in town. Donning its trademarked, bright colored outfits, this band certainly knows how to give a show like no other. After all, they've been touring nonstop for 40 years now, and it seems very likely they'll be at it for at least another 40 more.
As teenagers were trekking into unfamiliar territory in the 1960s, life was taking a turn. It was a little groovier and a little more colorful, hair a little longer and skirts a little shorter. Four decades later as life has become seemingly grayer and faster paced, one thing has remained constant: The Beatles.
As the Beatle album "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" celebrated its 40th anniversary June 1, it is clear the music that appealed to a generation past hasn't lost its magic — in fact it is also appealing to today's teenagers, the offsprings of the '60s.
Widely hailed as the first concept album, "Pepper" created a persona The Beatles took on. As the Lonely Hearts Club Band was performing, The Beatles were performing.
"It's so incredible," said Terri Hemmert, host of "Breakfast with The Beatles" on Sunday mornings on Chicago radio station WXRT. "It was an album that just people played all the time."
The Beatles, who unofficially quit touring because of Beatlemania's accumulated madness, decided to create an album that would tour for them, to perform the concerts The Beatles said goodbye to. While The Beatles were able to experience the stardom they so longed for when starting off as four mop-top boys from Liverpool, the screams of Beatlemania droned out all semblance of music on stage. If they couldn't hear themselves, they couldn't improve. If they couldn't improve as musicians, there seemed to be no reason to perform. While it was a hard choice, they agreed it for the best. The logical next step was to quit touring. But how to break it to the fans? They decided not to.
To continue touring for them, there was a strange new album and an even stranger, albeit fictitious, band. Beatle Paul McCartney and the band's personal assistant Neil Aspinall conceived the Lonely Hearts Club Band and saw it as a solution to the fans' demands to see The Beatles live.
"It took nine months to make [Pepper], which at that time was unheard of," said Greg Kot, music critic for the Chicago Tribune and co-host of the nationally syndicated radio show "Sound Opinions," which is produced by Chicago Public Radio. "[The Beatles] were making albums every four months, and then they stopped touring and went into a studio, secluding themselves and starting making this very elaborate record."
Die-hard "Pepper" fans vow to listen only to the album from start to finish. There isn't any other way to listen to it.
Hemmert, who teaches a history of rock and soul class at Columbia College, can recollect asking a student if he had listened to the album from start to in its entirety.
'I know all the songs, but no, I've never heard it.'
'Okay, so program your iPod in sequence, and listen to it from start to finish, and tell me what you think,' she told him.
The next week, the student came back excited to tell his teacher about the experience.
'Oh my God, it was like hearing it for the first time,' he said. 'It was so different. I knew all the songs, but you're right. Listening to it that way made more sense.'
The concept The Beatles tried to create with the album was an experience — not just individual tracks. While each song was good, the real experience was in listening to the album in its entirety. That, as Hemmert's student learned, was completely different from having listened to each track independently.
The band warms up. The band is introduced. Applause and laughter are heard. The concert continues and segues into a much-anticipated solo. And toward the end of the performance, the band says goodbye and gives a spectacular encore.
Yet despite the fact the album starts and ends on a note that reminds audience members they're enjoying an exclusive Pepper concert at the luxury of working out at the gym, enjoying free time at home or while driving to the grocery store, it's what's missing in the middle that has rock critics debating. Is it *the* first concept album? Is it *even* a concept album?
"It made the album the album," said Matt Wilczynski, president of Hollywood Rock Academy, a music school that promotes the arts for Los Angeles students by providing them with instruments. "It is the first album that didn't have any singles on it...before that, an album was a collection of singles and filler music."
While some embrace the album's revolutionarily different structure to be the first concept album, many others retort, saying that because the concept is only apparent in the first and last two tracks, the structure is rudimentary at best — admitting only that the album inspired and allowed for the creation of "real" concept albums by later bands, such as Pink Floyd.
"It was sort of a flimsy album," Kot said. He differs from most critics who think of "Pepper" as the first great rock album; in fact, he sees the album as something that doesn't hold together, egregiously woven with weak song writing. More of a "Revolver" type of guy — this is a man who said, "To my mind, 'Sgt. Pepper's' is probably the most overwritten about, overthought about, overexposed rock album of all time. Everybody, pretty much everybody who needs to know about Sgt. Pepper's knows it's been forced down our throats for the last 40 years." — he actually thinks there's not much worth celebrating about with the recent 40th anniversary.
It is clear the songs in between have no relevance to each other. What parallel can be drawn between "Within You, Without You" and "When I'm 64"? Between "Being for the Benefit of Mr. Kite" and "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds"? Between "Getting Better" and "Lovely Rita"? The album lacked the continuity of an overarching theme.
Yet knowing how the album could fail to live up to its groundbreaking status, "Pepper" was still the first Beatle album that stayed intact in its American release. Classic Beatle albums usually had some discrepancy between the original UK version and the modified US version. For example, The Beatles' second album in the United Kingdom was "With The Beatles" while the American equivalent was "Meet The Beatles." While the songs were largely similar in the equivalent albums, the American albums were typically a couple songs (saved for singles) short of the real deal.
But "Pepper" changed everything.
"The Beatles said, 'You can't touch this. It has to come out with all these songs in this order, and shut up, and put it out,' " Hemmert explains. "It was the first time we heard an album The Beatles intended for us to hear it."
Concept or not, one thing is indisputable, and that is the timeless, universal influence "Pepper" has had on music.
It's hard to deny an overwhelming feeling of nostalgia when thinking about the album and its wide-reaching and colossal impact on a societal and individual level. The album's eminence is beyond doubt.
"It really changed everything forever," Wilczynski said.
"It really changed music .... This just affected everything," said Catherine Schwanke, a Northwestern University sophomore from Waupaca, Wisc.
"Sgt. Pepper definitely changed everything," Hemmert said.
Beatle fans can't help but think of how this album alone proved to be a turning point in history. They can't help but think how everything changed. Music changed forever. Society changed forever.
Evan Hill, a Madison, Wisconsin. resident and recent Northwestern University graduate, can remember his sophomore year in college when he and his roommate spent weeks listening to "Pepper" everyday.
"We talked about it a lot and decided it was probably their best album," Hill said. "To me, it was always about how everyday life is psychedelic or the intersection between everyday life and this underground sort of psychedelic feeling in the '60s."
And the year that really defined the 60s was 1967. It was the Summer of Love. A new movement was rising. It was about free love, about experimentation; it was counterculture.
"It was the Summer of Love. It really was," Hemmert said. "It started hand-in-hand with The Beatles. They were always the first to do things, but one of the reasons they were so popular is that they tapped into what was going on — but they were still leading too at the same time."
Hemmert, who missed the Summer of Love because she was working on a cruise ship, said the generation was ready for the movement and ready for the album.
"The timing was perfect," she said. "It came right at the beginning of summer. It was our last week of school. We were so ready to get off campus."
But the timing was also right atmospherically.
"If they put that album in 1964, people would've gone 'What? What is this?' But by 1967, there's all this change.
"It was like the soundtrack for that summer."
Andre Gardner, a radio personality in Philadelphia for WMGK who hosts the nationally syndicated radio show "Breakfast with The Beatles" and a daily podcast "The Beatles Minute," has made a life for himself by studying one of his biggest passions. When the album's 40th anniversary was just weeks away, "Pepper" was a frequent topic on his shows.
"['Pepper'] is a masterpiece in the sound. I think it's a masterpiece in the song writing, and nothing up until that point had sounded like that before."
Gardner attributes The Beatles's curiosity and experimentation to the creation of "Pepper." There was the obvious experimentation of drugs, but there was something even more important, and that was the experimentation of sound in the studio to create an album with a completely new sound, a sound that astounded many who heard it for the first time.
Hemmert can recall listening to the album for the first time.
"We played it all the way through, and it was unlike anything we had ever heard. It was so advanced. Revolver was a great album — in fact, Revolver is still my favorite album — and it's so experimental, and they took that and took it a step further."
She spent the night at a friend's apartment listening to it over and over again.
The album was advanced for its time. It's hard to locate a sound that even resembled "Pepper." Great albums, such as Bob Dylan's "Blonde on Blonde" and The Beach Boys's "Pet Sounds," did indeed exist, but no artist had managed to integrate its canvas and studio to really be the artwork. No artists had done so — until The Beatles.
"What Sgt. Pepper was attempting to do was to introduce the studio as an instrument in the making of that record," Kot said. "It wasn't just about guitars, drums and vocals anymore. It was about making the studio, turning the studio into an instrument in the way you can treat things, the way you can distort sound."
The Beatles now devoted the amount of time it took to record their first album, "Please, Please Me," (which was less than 10 hours) for just singular tracks, such as "Strawberry Fields Forever." "Strawberry," although not released on "Pepper," was released as a single alongside "Penny Lane" before "Pepper" debuted.
Having stopped touring, The Beatles had the flexibility and the ability to work hours on end to perfect each song, to perfect the album.
"This was the first time the album was considered the art form," Hemmert said. "It wasn't just an album [of] songs or a couple of hits."
But this different sound didn't start in 1967. Even during the "Rubber Soul"/"Revolver" era, one can hear that certain songs, such as "Rain," could not be performed live, could not live outside the studio except on record. The Beatles were continually trying for new sounds, and a full integration of the studio allowed them to create this modern sound.
Timeless.
There are many adjectives that can be affixed to the "Pepper" album, but timeless seems most apt. Whether people think it's the greatest album of all time or think the album is, at best, a great album idea poorly executed, the truth is that the album is timeless. Even 40 years later, the album maintains its stronghold across all audiences, not only appealing to the original flower children of the '60s but also appealing to today's Jay-Z generation.
Time has ticked by. Forty years, 480 months, 14,610 days, 350,640 hours, 21,038,400 minutes or 1,262,304,000 seconds.
And even with an album two-fifths of a century old, "Pepper" still sounds fresh.
"That's the thing," Wilczynski said. "If you heard Sgt. Pepper for the first time, it sounds like it could've been released this week."
By no means does the equipment of Abbey Road Studios in the '60s compare to the technology that today's artists use. It's the music that gives it a modern presence.
"You'd think a period piece like that would sound very dated," Hemmert said.
While the album can stand alone to play in 2007, BBC 2 Radio showed what the Lonely Hearts Club Band can really sound like today.
"Pepper" was made for the groovy generation that experienced the Summer of Love, but the album still finds itself to be relevant 40 years later.
"It really does stand the test of time," Gardner said.
BBC 2 Radio recently produced a tribute album consisting of 13 modern-day bands each performing a track that aired in a two-hour special June 2, the original American release date of the record in 1967.
But the reaction the album generated was mixed.
"Who doesn't know about 'Sgt. Pepper's'?" Kot asked. "It's one of the most overexposed records. It doesn't need a new generation of musicians paying tribute to them."
While many feel that no band could ever even attempt to recreate The Beatles, some feel it's hard refusing to pay tribute to what could be considered the greatest rock band.
"I think any band would probably jump at the chance to do a cover of a classic album," Hill said. "Can they replicate the sound? No. The new bands when they're covering them — they probably won't even come close."
But not being able to recreate The Beatles's magic in Abbey Road Studios four decades
ago isn't necessarily a bad thing.
"Let's face it, you can never replicate the sounds on 'Sgt. Pepper's'," Gardner said. "I think what they're doing is sort of a loving tribute to a band they were most likely influenced by."
It might seem just a tad ironic to some that the BBC is involved with "Pepper" in any celebratory shape, way or form. When the album was first released, the network was so convinced the album was entrenched in drug references — and thus promoted drug use — that certain tracks were banned from the air.
"Now 40 years later, [the BBC is] paying tribute to [The Beatles]," Hemmert said. "What comes around."
One such track that was banned was "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds." The imagery of "Lucy" seemed possible only from the perspective of someone on acid. The title apparently gave it all away. Lucy. Sky. Diamonds. Even as John Lennon explained the inspiration of the song came from a drawing his son, Julian, did, the network was convinced of the drug influence. A world of tangerine trees, marmalade skies and

kaleidoscope eyes could only exist in a LSD-dominated world. And thus, the song was banned.

Drug references seemed paramount in the album. When Billy Shears (Ringo Starr's alter ego on the album) says he "gets high with a little help from his friends," is he referring to what everyone thinks he's referring to? Is the character from "Getting Better" indeed getting better from a drug addiction? Does the imagery of "digging some weeds" in the garden in "When I'm 64" really refer to a flower bed in the backyard? When Lennon sings "I'd love to turn you on" in "A Day in the Life," does he want to turn listeners onto drugs?

It is undeniably a masterpiece in and of itself. Many consider it their favorite Beatle song of all time, but absolutely every last fan will recognize how incredibly beautiful, powerful and utterly perfect this song is — up until the very last 30 seconds of high pitched, incomprehensible echo.

It is another song banned by the BBC. It is the closing track to the album. It is the encore of the Lonely Hearts Club Band. It is "A Day in the Life."

The applause is heard as the imaginary concertgoers implicit within the album anticipate what could be considered one of the most stunningly magnificent songs in history. And Lennon sings.

The Beatles's producer George Martin called it haunting. The voice truly is.

"I read the news today, oh boy," Lennon sings.

And so he tells of a day in the life.

Somehow from reading different headlines in the day's paper, there's this transition to McCartney who then showcases another person's day in the life. While being transported from one scene to another, the listener is given a taste of what a day in the life really is.

And in between, there's this orgasmic orchestral crescendo that amplifies into a big clash — into chaos — to convey the momentous ups and downs of not just life, but of a day in the life.

There could've been no better ending to "Pepper." Nothing could ever follow "A Day in the Life."

The recognizable final chord.

And the album ends.

The concert ends.

The Beatles evolved, and evolved quickly, and all in a period of just a couple years.

"So you have to imagine they went from being 'N Sync to being Radiohead, and then they were Metallica," Wilczynski said. "Did all that in six years. 'Love Me Do' to 'Strawberry Fields Forever' is a pretty big jump."

Even before "Pepper," they were no longer the four mop-top boys playing to their teeny bopper fans.

"They took a chance ... with 'Revolver' and 'Sgt. Pepper' because it did alienate some of their fans," Hemmert said. "That's why The Monkees came out — because people wanted that mop-top, cute, four guys being chased around the beach. They wanted that, and they didn't want these guys with moustaches singing songs you had to think."

Often, rock critics dismiss The Monkees as an inadequate band because of its manufactured appeal to fill the void The Beatles left when their music became more experimental and progressive.

"[The Beatles] did take a big chance, but at the same time, they picked up a lot of new listeners too. And I think what they did with taking those chances and losing some of the teeny bopper fans, they ensured their place in history."

The Beatles released their first album "Please, Please me" in 1963. Over the course of the years that McCartney, Lennon, Starr and George Harrison composed the band, they released 12 albums and a soundtrack ("Yellow Submarine"). The last album the band released before disbanding was "Let It Be" in 1970. In between, they also starred in three movies: "A Hard Day's Night," "Help!" and "Magical Mystery Tour." Within the course of those seven years, The Beatles created a completely different image and a completely different sound. It is obvious The Beatles achieved more as artists within those seven years than most artists could ever in a lifetime. The Beatles, with never a second of spare time, left an indelible legacy.

And while fans everywhere argue whether "Rubber Soul," "The White Album" or "Abbey Road" is the all-time best of The Beatles, it is undeniable that "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" played its hand in helping The Beatles establish their legacy. From the colorful costumes, debatable concept to even just gorgeous songs, the album's place in history is secured.

Tickets are still available to the biggest show of the century.

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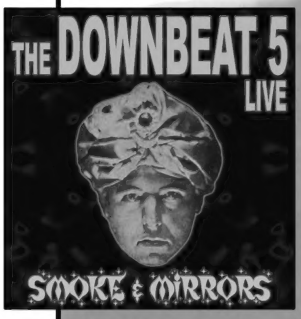

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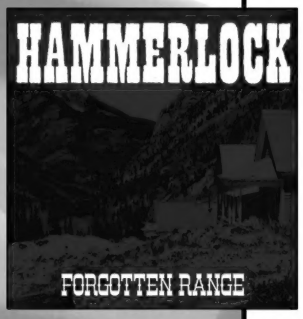

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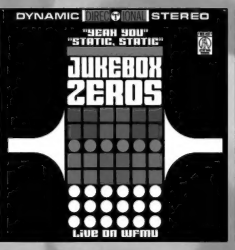

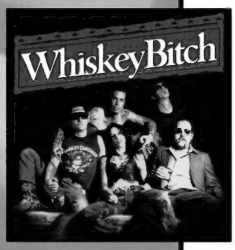

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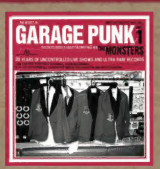

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